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SICILY INVASION
Was Operation Husky a turning point?

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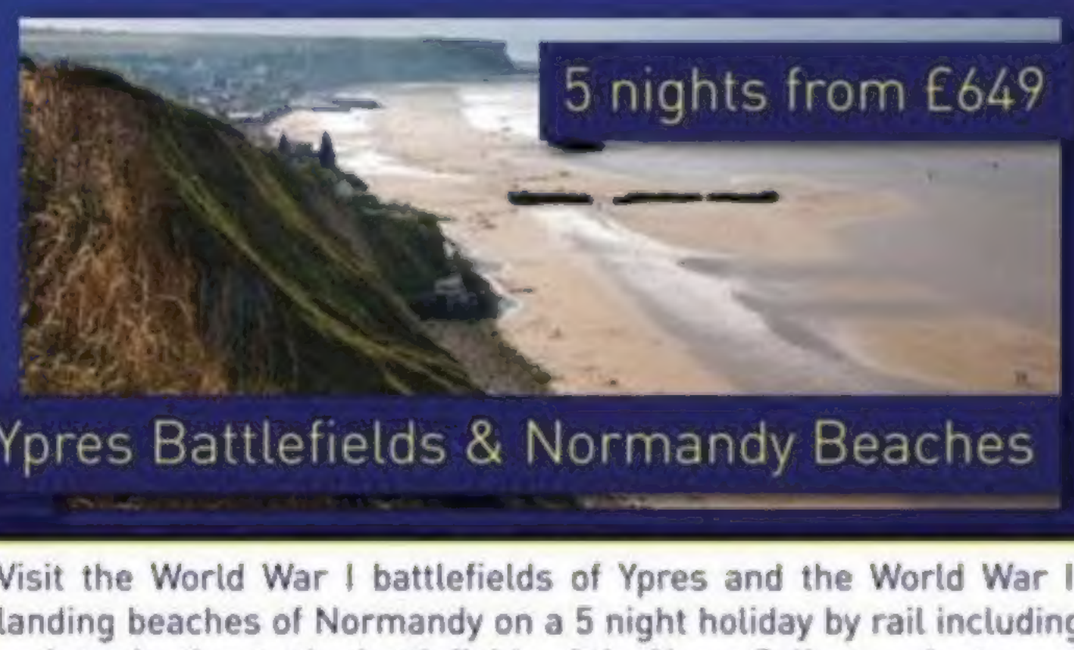

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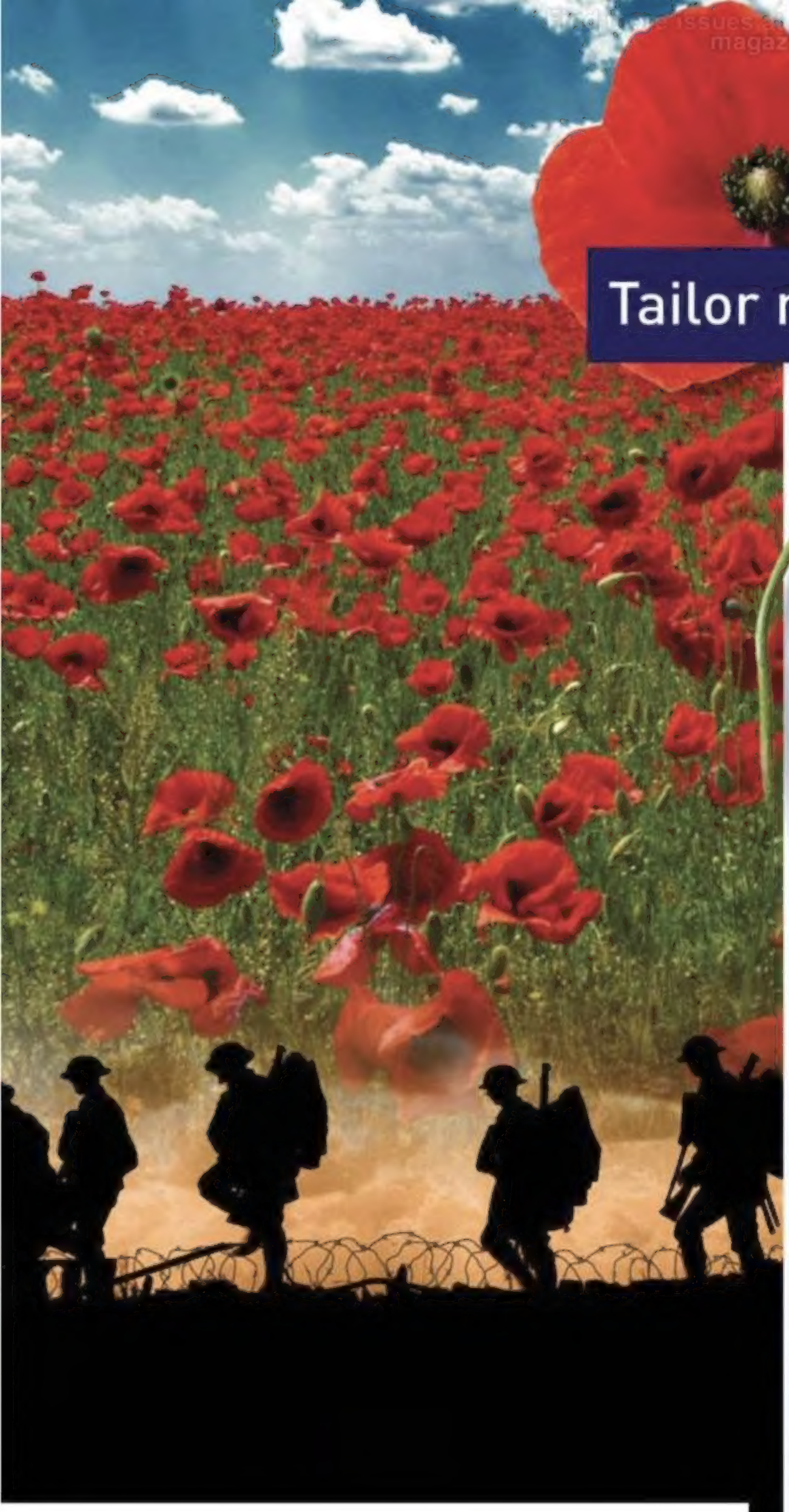

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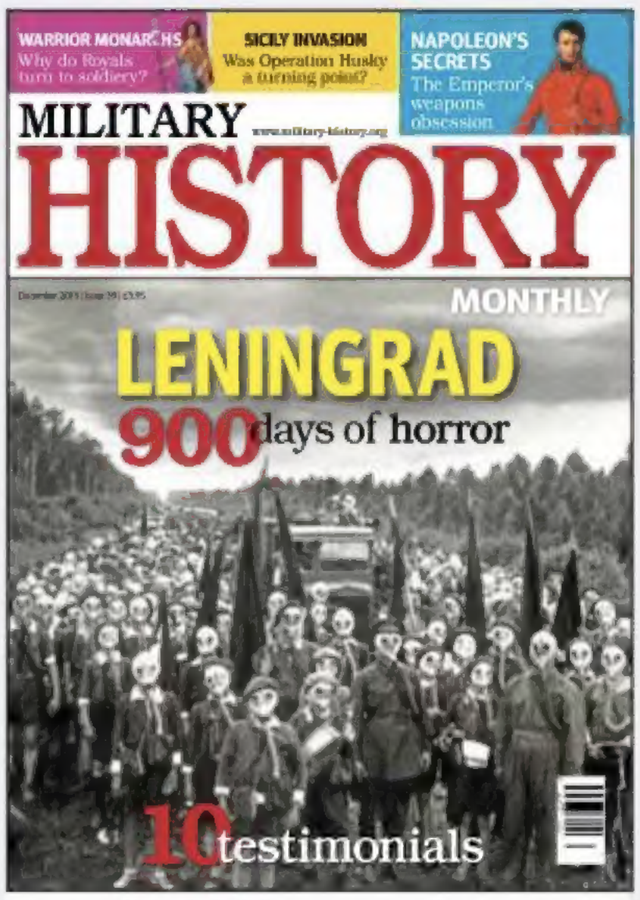

ON THE COVER: 'Pioneers in Defense Drill'
Photo: Viktor Bulla

Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner

Stalingrad is better known. Fought with the intensity of the Somme or Passchendaele, it was the battle above all others that turned the tide in the Second World War.

But Leningrad was worse. Of all the clashes between Nazi and Communist of the period 1941 to 1945, the 900-day Siege of the old revolutionary capital was an epic without compare.

Leningrad – formerly Petrograd – was the city where Bolshevism had swept to power in 1917. Hitler, his hatred of Communists as visceral as his hatred of the Jews, was determined to destroy it utterly. The infamous Commissar Order captured the spirit of the struggle: all Communist Party officials were to be shot.

Stalin was equally determined to hold it. And, despite everything that his monstrous regime had done to its own people, so were ordinary Russians. Total Russian casualties were two million. Around half of these were civilians who simply starved to death. Yet the city did not surrender.

Steve Roberts is our guide to the horrors of the siege this issue, recounting the story from the perspective of ten very different participants.

Another WWII story this month is Dave Sloggett's analysis of the planning for Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Was it the right target? How well conducted was the operation?

Also we have Carolyn Harris's essay on the British royals at war, Allan Ashworth's uncovering of Napoleon's 'secret weapons' research, and Jules Stewart's account of the great tribal uprising on the North-West Frontier in 1897.

Neil Faulkner.

Who we are:

Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

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Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover in the next issue? You can give us your feedback:

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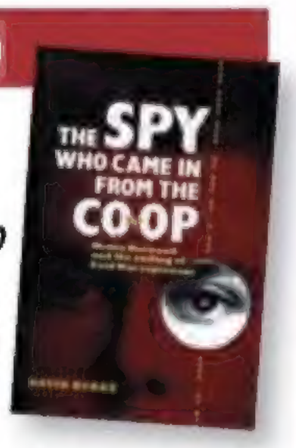

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DISPATCHES

Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.

Above German defences near Schnitzel Farm.
Left New Zealand wreath placed on Fanny's Farm by Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Beale.

MESSINES MODEL UPDATE

After nearly four weeks of excavation, the concrete terrain model of the battle of Messines, a small town in Belgium, is about to be covered back over with a protective membrane and tonnes of specially selected soil. The battle – which began at 3.10am on 7 June 1917 – was the first major Allied victory of the Great War. It was also the first victory of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, and where Sam Frickleton of the NZRB won a Victoria Cross.

Recording of the model is under way, and 3D mapping will provide an opportunity to recreate the model on computers and in 1:1 scale. The Cannock Chase model was constructed by the New Zealand Rifle Brigade after the battle to train new recruits arriving from abroad.

The excavation was funded by Natural England, and the main contractor employed for the work was No Man's Land, the battlefield archaeology group headed by Kirsty Nichol. Their work involved local volunteers, many of whom had no archaeological experience but all of whom were crucial to ensuring the project succeeded.

The whole area covers some 1,600 square yards and includes trenches, roads, destroyed buildings, and even contour lines. Although the viewing platform around three sides of the model remained virtually untouched and not all of the drainage channels were excavated due to the exigencies of time, interesting items were found where these channels were emptied.

The area was originally rediscovered in 2007 by Richard Pursehouse while out walking his dog. The dog began scratching a root of a bush, thinking it was a stick for Richard to throw. This digging exposed sections of 'lipped' concrete that puzzled his owner. The next week, Richard brought his friend Lee Dent to the site, as both are members of the local military history research group The Chase Project.

By exposing a small area of concrete and identifying trenches and roads, the two members of the Project realised that it must be the site of the model. They contacted the County Archaeologist Stephen Dean, with whom they worked closely, providing him with a plethora of information, diaries, aerial photographs, and large maps of the model. Much of this information was to prove crucial at the excavation, especially the large-sized maps and photographs, as they were the only ones available to the archaeologists.

Many surprises were revealed during the excavation, the main one being just how much had survived since the model was built in early 1918. Bomb-damaged buildings remain in situ, and although much of the general area has disintegrated, the main features of roads, buildings, trenches, and even trench railways have remained. The church – complete with a clock in the tower showing the time as 3.10am – was removed for safe-keeping.

NELSON'S 'SON' DISCOVERED

A portrait miniature of Captain Edward Thornbrough Parker (1778-1801), the favourite protégé and intimate of Admiral Lord Nelson, who referred to him as his 'son', has been discovered in his family's collection. It is the only known image of this enigmatic young officer, who was killed under Nelson's command aged just 23.

Leading Nelson specialist Martyn Downer, who identified the portrait, said of the find, 'seeing Parker's face for the first time is a very exciting moment for scholars and Nelson enthusiasts. Nelson's intimate friendship with junior officer Parker has intrigued and frustrated generations of biographers. One Victorian writer even wildly suggested that Parker was father to the child of Nelson's mistress Emma Hamilton. Discovery of this touching portrait finally completes a gallery of images of the most important people in Nelson's life. '

From a naval family background, Parker entered the service as midshipman in 1790, serving in a series of ships before joining *Mermaid* on the outbreak of war with France. In 1796 he passed his lieutenancy exams, his career until then following the familiar pattern of many young officers. Then a still mysterious but obviously traumatic event took place which cast a shadow over Parker's professional career.

It was in this distressed condition that Nelson first encountered him, likely in 1798. The admiral took charge of Parker, securing him a place in his flagship *Foudroyant* after the Battle of the Nile. Under Nelson's patronage, 'little Parker' was rapidly promoted to commander and accompanied the admiral in negotiations following the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801.

By now, Parker was not only acting as Nelson's unofficial aide-de-camp and amanuensis, but also as informal messenger between the admiral and his mistress Emma, Lady Hamilton. He described Nelson in vivid terms as 'my friend, my nurse, my attendant, my patron, my protector, nay him who the world cannot find words sufficient to praise'.

Calling himself a 'Nelsonite', Parker accompanied Nelson and Emma on holiday in England, forging intimate ties with them both. When Nelson was then posted to command the anti-invasion forces in the Channel, Parker assisted in planning operations, taking the leading role in a failed boat attack against French forces at Boulogne on 15 August 1801. During the mission, Parker's thigh was shattered by shot. He was taken to lodgings in Deal where, after suffering terribly and enduring the amputation of his leg, he died on 27 September.

Nelson and Emma were stricken with grief, arranging and paying for a funeral in the town with full military honours before erecting a monument to Parker's memory. At Nelson's request, some of Parker's hair was preserved for eventual burial with the admiral, a token of an extraordinary and intimate friendship.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ARTEFACTS OF THE FUTURE

The RAF Museum is using cutting-edge digital technology to share its newly acquired exhibit – the Dornier Do17 bomber – with the world.

Using a specially developed Augmented Reality App called 'Apparition: Dornier17', a full-scale 3D vision of the aircraft will be visible in situ at various locations around the world.

In June the museum successfully lifted the only known German Dornier Do17 bomber from the waters of the Goodwin Sands, three miles off the coast of south-east England. The event was a media phenomenon, with viewers across the globe tuning in to watch it happen live.

A grant of £75,000 for exhibition development from Wargaming has allowed the museum to work with the redLoop design and innovation centre to develop this new method for exhibiting artefacts.

DOWNING STREET RECEPTION

ABF The Soldiers' Charity brought together serving soldiers, veterans from all three services, and senior military figures for a special event at 10 Downing Street, hosted by Samantha Cameron.

ABF The Soldiers' Charity, the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity, and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund are the national charities of the British Armed Forces. Together they support every generation of Britain's military family, as well as joining forces for the British Military Tournament each year.

These Armed Forces organisations worked together, with support from Mrs Cameron, to welcome guests to the special tri-services reception at Number 10. Major-General Martin Rutledge, Chief Executive of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, said, 'We were delighted to be able to work in partnership with the RNRMC and the RAF Benevolent Fund for this special event. We are hugely grateful to Samantha Cameron for having agreed to host us.'

WHEN THE WORLD CHANGED

The terror of total war and its impact on life around the world will be the focus of a major new exhibition on the First World War at York Castle Museum next year. '1914: when the world changed forever' will take visitors from the recruitment office to the horrors of the front-line, from the cultural revolution happening at home to the thousands of men defending countries they had never set foot in before.

New technology will be combined with the museum's extensive military, costume, and social history collections, with fascinating objects on display that have never before been shown to the public.

The exhibition is the central part of a £1.7 million project at the museum, with most of the funding coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

HAVE YOUR SAY

Send your thoughts on issues raised in *Military History Monthly* to:

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PUTTING THE BOOT IN

I was horrified by Major-General Julian Thompson's recent outburst against Trenchard ('Letters', *MHM* 38). To call him bone-headed and an over-promoted major is ill-informed.

The RAF came into being because of the RFC, the RNAS, and their respective masters in the War Office and Admiralty being unwilling to mount a credible air defence of the UK against the German Zeppelins and bombers. A forceful group of characters that included Field Marshal Smuts, Frederick Sykes, and, of course, Trenchard, ensured the birth of the world's first independent air service.

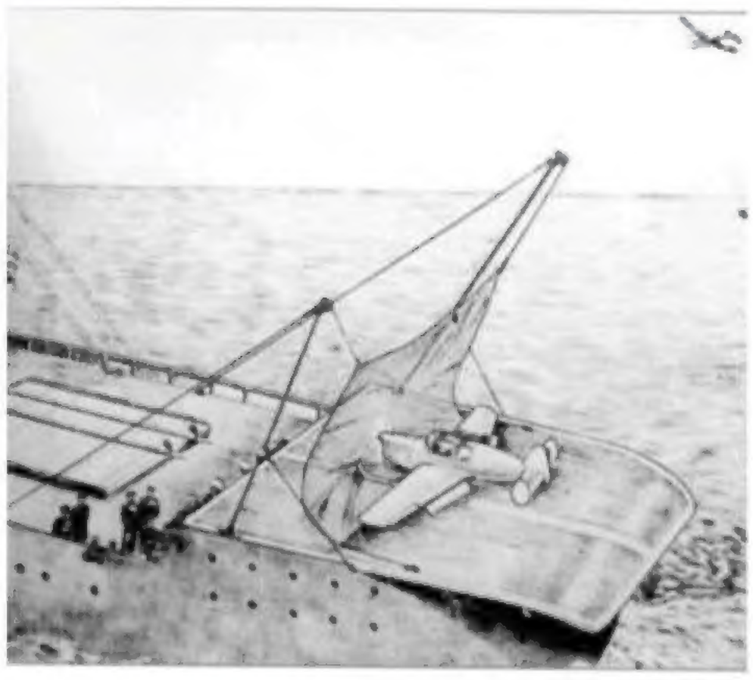
Post-war, the Army and Navy fought tooth and nail to destroy the RAF. Had they succeeded, in 1940 all our fighters and bombers would have been frittered away in France in a hopeless attempt to avert disaster in the land battle. Anyone suffering the delusion that the Royal Navy would have sunk any German invasion attempt should look to what happened around Crete in 1941. Trapped in the Channel as target practice for 350 dive-bombers and 1,200 medium bombers, it would have been plain murder.

As to the Bomber Offensive, as has been said numerous times, there was no other way we could hit back at the German homeland. Nibbling round the periphery of the German and Italian Empires would have had no impact. And just imagine the impact on the Eastern Front of all those anti-aircraft guns, not to mention 100,000 extra men and 1,000 aircraft. That is before including the effect of bombing on German industry and communications, which is finally being given more credence by historians. Remember Goebbels' comment after inspecting Hamburg after Operation Gomorrah: 'Six more of these and we have lost the war.'

Finally, carrier aircraft were never a priority for the admirals. When the RAF were in control, naval aircraft were as good as land-based aircraft. With the Admiralty, the single-seat monoplane fighter never appeared and instead the Skua dive-bomber/fighter was foisted on the Fleet Air Arm, followed by the Fulmar and Firefly. For torpedo-bombers, they had to soldier on with biplanes long after the US Navy and Japanese Imperial Naval Air Service had introduced the monoplane.

Then, as now, we need 'Balanced Armed Forces', capable in every area. Julian Thompson, a Royal Marine, seems to have lost sight of this in his eagerness to 'put the boot in' on the Royal Air Force. We have seen over-cutting of our armed forces in every area, with the elimination of carrier-borne aircraft and maritime reconnaissance aircraft the most significant. The boot should go in on the politicians who never ever learn anything from history.

Rod Sanders
Lincoln



MILES' REJECTION

Your Battle of the Atlantic article (*MHM* 37) was excellent. Perhaps losses in Merchant Navy personnel could have been included. Your readers might also be interested to learn that in 1943 the light aircraft designer George Miles was deeply troubled by the lack of air cover for Atlantic convoys. He subsequently invented and tested a means of launching and recovering one of his slow-flying AOP designs – the Miles M.38 Mariner – directly onto decks of merchant ships, by means of a catapult and a net.

In this illustration *[bottom left]* note that the artist neglected to show the hole in the net for the propeller. Capable of carrying two depth charges, the aircraft could also have acted as a deterrent to U-boats.

His ideas were turned down by the Navy, for reasons that were not disclosed until 1959, when they were found to be spurious. The rejection of an idea to save lives rankled with Miles until his death.

Jim Pratt
Peeblesshire

MAP CONFUSION

In your 'Welcome' (*MHM* 38) you say that Waterloo was a mainly British battle. This was not the case. In round figures, Wellington commanded 68,000 men on the field of Waterloo: 26,000 were German, 24,000 British, and 18,000 Netherlanders. The 17,000 men detached around Hal were part British, part Dutch. On the field by 4.30pm were 16,000 Prussians, by 6.30pm 30,000 Prussians, and by 7.30pm 52,000 Prussians. Given these figures it is difficult to see how the British could be described as the main players on 18 June 1815.

Second, it was somewhat disconcerting to have the map of Leipzig on page 15 with south at the top. I cannot recall the last time I saw a battle map which did not have north at the top! This would not have mattered had not the author in his text said, 'it is easiest to imagine Leipzig as the centre of a vast clock… with Blücher advancing roughly between the 10 and the 12…'. Clock-faces always have 12 at the top, which means that Blücher should have been shown at the top of the page and not at the bottom where (in clock terms) he was deployed between the 8 and the 6. Confusing if text and map do not agree!

Dave Gladding
Yeovil

EDITOR'S NOTE

Ian Bull replies: The disposition of the troops was a broad oval. To fill a whole page, the only way to represent this was to turn the map on its side. Had the map been produced in the usual orientation, it would have had to have been squeezed into just half a page.

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A DOCTOR IN THE TRENCHES

The human touch: stories of war and conflict from readers of *MHM*.

Andrew Davidson is a journalist, who was the author of the *Sunday Times* business interview from 2003 to 2012.

Above Fred Davidson cradles a spent shell behind the lines at La Boutillerie, south of Armentières.

In an extract from his new book *Fred's War*, **Andrew Davidson** captures the chaotic career of his medical-officer grandfather Fred, who worked in the 1st battalion, Cameronians during WWI. Here, the Cameronians find themselves digging the first trenches outside Ypres in October 1914, as the fighting settles into an uneasy stalemate.

The combination of rain and shelling turns surrounding fields into a quagmire. Fred Davidson hands his camera to an orderly and wades through the clods behind his aid post to pull out a spent casing. His pose is of a man making a memo to self – knee-deep in mud, pipe clenched as always, hair matted from sweat, shell in two hands, flat northern France stretching off to the grey horizon. This is how it was. I was there.

Some go no further. Lieutenant Hardinge, newly arrived, shakes Corporal Eady awake in his trench. No response. So he lights a match low only to see blood-matted hair. Sniped. Eady had died the previous evening, and slumped, presumed sleeping.

Brigade HQ insists on daytime patrols to probe the German strength and position. This is lieutenants' work – one reason why their lifespan was shortened in trench warfare. Hill, Newman, and Rooke are sent out with a platoon each, crawling up to the German line. The top brass suspect the enemy is pulling back by day, leaving only snipers to harass the British line. If they are wrong, it could be a suicidal task for the patrols.

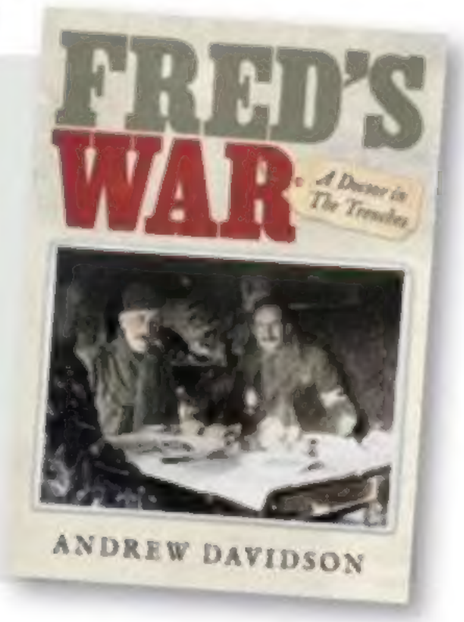
Hill expresses his misgivings to C Company's Captain Ritchie, who agrees the insistence on a whole platoon jeopardises everyone. Four men would do, no need for 25. They devise a plan to put most of the men on the flank, to provide covering fire – so as not to disobey the order – while Hill and three others crawl forward.

Eventually 20 men prepare to slip out, removing all unit insignia, ditching their packs, donning balaclavas, stuffing 40 rounds apiece in their pockets. They crawl up a ditch towards the German line, finding a trip-wire of tins in front of an enemy listening post. Pelt the wire with clods of earth. Tin hit. Nothing happens, so in they go, sliding over the side into the empty listening post, then slowly, softly forward into the enemy trench. It too is empty.

Now they hear rifle-fire to their left, so back out of the trench, squirm down the ditch, head home. On their way, they stumble across a wounded Cameronian lying concealed in a shell-hole. He has hidden there since their first night. Hill sends word back for stretcher-bearers, they crawl up the

FRED'S WAR

Fred's War is published by Short Books, price £25. It contains over 200 original photographs of the Cameronians in training and at war, taken by Fred Davidson, Robert Money, and others. The photograph by Money (p.12) in this extract appears by permission of South Lanarkshire Council.



ditch, but now the Germans know, and are flooding the trench. Firing is continuous, rifle bullets sending up spouts of earth like exhalations of brown air. The bearers roll the wounded man onto a stretcher but cannot move, pinned down with the likelihood of a German patrol now coming after them.

So they must knee-shuffle, nose to the earth, stopping and starting, half-dragging, half-pushing the stretcher, until they get back safely. Later Hill is summoned to Brigade HQ to report what he saw. The HQ, 400 yards behind the front, is in one of a clutch of devastated cottages strung along La Boutillerie road, and has had every door nailed shut, planks across the top half, bottom panel kicked in for access – so entry to each room can only be accomplished by crawling. It is designed to stop a rushed assault, but as Hill notes, it makes for an undignified way of entering.

Fred at work

Fred has a shallow dug-out for an aid post. He clears space to work on the man brought in, compound fracture left leg, bone protruding. He never trusts bones. He remembers those drawings of breaks in Thomson's. Or was it Milroy's? Fothergill's? The yards of textbooks a doctor must work through. And all those ways to break a leg. Transverse, oblique, spiral, stellate, wedge, greenstick, impacted…

The soldier on the table is calm now, opiated, exhausted. The orderly has cut the trouser leg off, and Fred cleans the wound, thinking, remembering, always the words while he works.

It may be known that a bone is broken by the following signs: 1. Pain. 2. Loss of power. 3. Alteration in shape. 4. Unnatural mobility. 5. Crepitus – when handled there is generally a grating sensation. 6. Swelling of the limb is generally present. 7. The patient may have experienced a sensation of sudden snap or giving-way of the bone.

Well, he is not up to asking, just deal with it, mutters Fred.

A bone has its blood vessels just as any other portion of the body; it must not be looked on as a hard, bloodless structure, but as a portion of the living body which is itself alive.

He has so much now stored away that ransacking his brain is like running down library shelves, looking for the right volume. But for this work, for medicine, where whole encyclopaedias must be memorised, it helps. If he were a minister, it would be the Bible, and all those books of biblical studies that his father pored over. His father who wanted him in the church too – his brother Bertie wouldn't, brother Jack ran to Canada, Fred ran to Fettes on his special scholarship… that was never a school to produce ministers, it didn't even allow ministers to teach there.

In order to allow the process of repair to proceed naturally, it is necessary that the broken ends of the bones remain completely at rest. Nature attempts to ensure this by causing pain when the limb is moved, and to assist Nature, and secure immobility, the surgeon fixes the limb in splints…

Fred always worries when the word 'Nature' comes into textbooks. Whose Nature? The same Nature that makes countries send these men to fight? But if we don't fight, what will the Germans take? And you can't run an Empire without defending it.

He has cleaned the wound, bound it, not too tight, allow for swelling, and is now strapping on a spare chair-leg, wrapped in cloth, tying it in place with old bootlaces – keeping odd bits of furniture, belts, laces, cloth is his new obsession. Saves finding a dirty old rifle for the splint, or a bayonet, or a scabbard, or cutting up a perfectly good table.

Ritchie's Farm

Under wet-wool skies and autumn drizzle the pattern is set, the Germans attacking each day from their trenches 600 yards away, and the Cameronians pushing them back. C, A, and D Companies are stretched across a mile, with B in support. The main road from Le Maisnil runs through the left of C Company – beside it a small farm that forms a salient in the line, jutting out into German territory, tagged 'Ritchie's Farm'.

Ritchie himself is up all night, reassuring his men as they lie uneasily in the trenches, wary about German movement. In his diary, he writes of the toll he is taking.

I am dead tired and beginning to see things – trees suddenly leap into the air and giant men lean over me pointing huge phantom fingers at ▷

Below Position of Cameronian trenches at La Boutillerie, a hamlet north of Fromelles, near Armentières in northern France. During the early stages of WWI, officers often copied scarce maps onto brown paper.

the enemy and I wake with a start in the act of falling down, terrified lest I have betrayed my trust and been to sleep – but I have only slept a fraction of a minute standing up and with my eyes open…

The Germans return at night in vigorous sorties. On 27 October small parties charge the trenches, shouting and bugling, then pull back. Later their rifles blaze away from their own trenches as if convinced a British counter-attack is in progress. Then they stop, make chicken noises and jeer. Ritchie asks Darling for more wire to reinforce his line the next day.

By 30 October the farm is under prolonged bombardment. For two nights, enemy patrols had scouted the area, probing the rolls of barbed wire that have been hastily pulled across no-man's-land, trying to pinpoint Cameronian positions. Orders were given not to fire, so nothing is revealed. Lieutenant Money catches the daytime bombardment on camera, a snapped tree to the right, top half dangling, the farm itself already in flames.

As darkness falls, the men brace themselves for the head-on infantry attack that inevitably follows. Nothing. Then after midnight they start to hear something, movement in the distance, men whispering orders, then the bleating of sheep. Ritchie is standing on the parapet of the trench in front of the farm, listening. Behind him, the men of C Company lay out extra clips for their rifles. Ritchie has been up and down the trench, encouraging them, telling them not to fire till given the order, pulling out his revolver and joking he will shoot anyone who fires before the whistle. The men stand nervously listening to the Germans getting closer, visible now, shadowy grey figures crouching behind a flock of sheep driven in front of them. They had all heard the stories of the Germans pushing village women before them at Quévy-le-Petit. In the end, there, the British had to fire.

250 yards, 200 yards, 150 yards…

Finally Ritchie blows his whistle and a cacophony of rifle and machine-gun fire erupts, the dark night suddenly ablaze with flashes, the smell of cordite rising, the bleating squeals of terrified sheep.

They can hear bugles blowing and shouted commands in German as the enemy attempts to rush the trenches. None get nearer than 20 yards away before dying in the onslaught.

The Germans pull back, regroup, and attack again. Beaten off, they retreat and then come a third time. Again the Cameronians shoot every German before the trenches are reached. It is a small slaughter, with few British casualties. But they include Ritchie, who is shot near the groin, shattering a leg bone while kneeling on the parapet to see if the Germans will return. His men bundle him into a shelter while the fighting continues. Hill holds his hand while shouting orders. His injury is symptomatic of the Cameronians' lack of equipment: no trench periscopes, no flares, no hand grenades, no trench mortars. Compared to the Germans, they are ill-prepared for this form of war.

Ritchie is stretchered back to Fred's aid post. His trouser leg is cut off, wound cleaned. Fred works hard to keep his hands out of the injury, never to touch, never to infect, handle as little as possible. In an aid post, in the mud and blood, he hasn't time constantly to carbolic his hands.

He trusts down the line, in the clearing station, they will wash the wound, with hydrogen peroxide, or boric acid, or perchloride of mercury, depending on what's to hand and who is on duty, not his bag. He writes M and T on Ritchie's forehead in indelible pencil to show morphine and a tourniquet have been applied, then fills in the tally, then moves on to the next man. Ritchie will live.

Above 'Ritchie's Farm', named after the captain defending it, under daytime bombardment from the Germans during the attacks of late October 1914.

He doesn't. He is sent back to the main dressing station that night, then back further by train to hospital. He dies three weeks later from infected wounds, the medical price paid for the anaerobic organisms bred by the ripe fields in which the war is fought. This is not the dry, desert sand of South Africa. This is freshly fertilised Flanders. A bullet wound can kill you weeks after you thought you had survived.

The spoils of war

German casualties now litter the wire in front of the Cameronian trenches. Attempts to bring in the wounded by stretcher-bearers are halted after they come under fire from the enemy trenches. Eventually those still alive are brought in at night, including a German medical officer, shot in the stomach, who has advanced with his men. Unlike British MOs he is armed with a revolver – in defiance of the Geneva Convention. Hill lays him on a fire-step. The doctor uses sign language to show the bearers how he should be bandaged, then French to ask for a capsule of morphine from his medical pack. When Hill checks later, the doctor is dead, his morphine vial almost empty. He had made his own choice, and clearly decided his wound was not something he would survive.

Fred is in his aid post when a bearer gives him the present from Hill, a beautiful, cowhide case filled with dressings, drugs, and instruments – the German MO's kit. He tells Hill later he has never seen anything so compact, or so well equipped, and he uses it from then on. He adds it to the growing pile of mementos donated by grateful soldiers, or handed on by hoarders like Hill, an obsessive keeper and filer of what is left behind. One item, a tattered pennant from the Prussian Death's Head regiment, Fred sends back to his father in St Cyrus for safe-keeping.

The Cameronians hold the line for another fortnight – there are simply not enough troops to relieve them. Britain's regular army is being worn away, as it struggles to hold back the Germans at the First Battle of Ypres.

Luckily for the men, the enemy does not realise how thinly the line is held here. A push straight through would have claimed the coast for the Germans, blocked off supplies of troops and ammunition, set in train a second push for Paris, and a possible invasion of England too.

Instead, the enemy pounds the trenches with short-barrelled howitzers day after day, but desists from full-on attacks. The Cameronians know, for now, it is a one-sided battle.

The Western Front Association

founded 1980

the Great War 1914-18: understood

By the close of the Great War in 1918, medical treatments and nursing standards had advanced considerably. Clinically, the methods of treatment for burns, amputations, poison gas and other direct war injuries bore no resemblance to those of 1914. Psychological disorders from combat such as shell-shock were much better understood.

The Great War is a fascinating subject, with a complex blend of military, social, science, political and economic history. To understand more about the 1914-18 period, and to appreciate the advances in medical science and related treatments, please **join us at The Western Front Association.**

LENINGRAD

THE 900-DAY SIEGE

LENINGRAD, 1941-1943

Hitler hated Leningrad. It was the birthplace of Bolshevism. More than any other Russian city, he wanted it destroyed. Here, **Steve Roberts** tells the story of the Second World War's greatest and most terrible siege through the experiences of ten participants – two German, six Russian, and two Finnish.

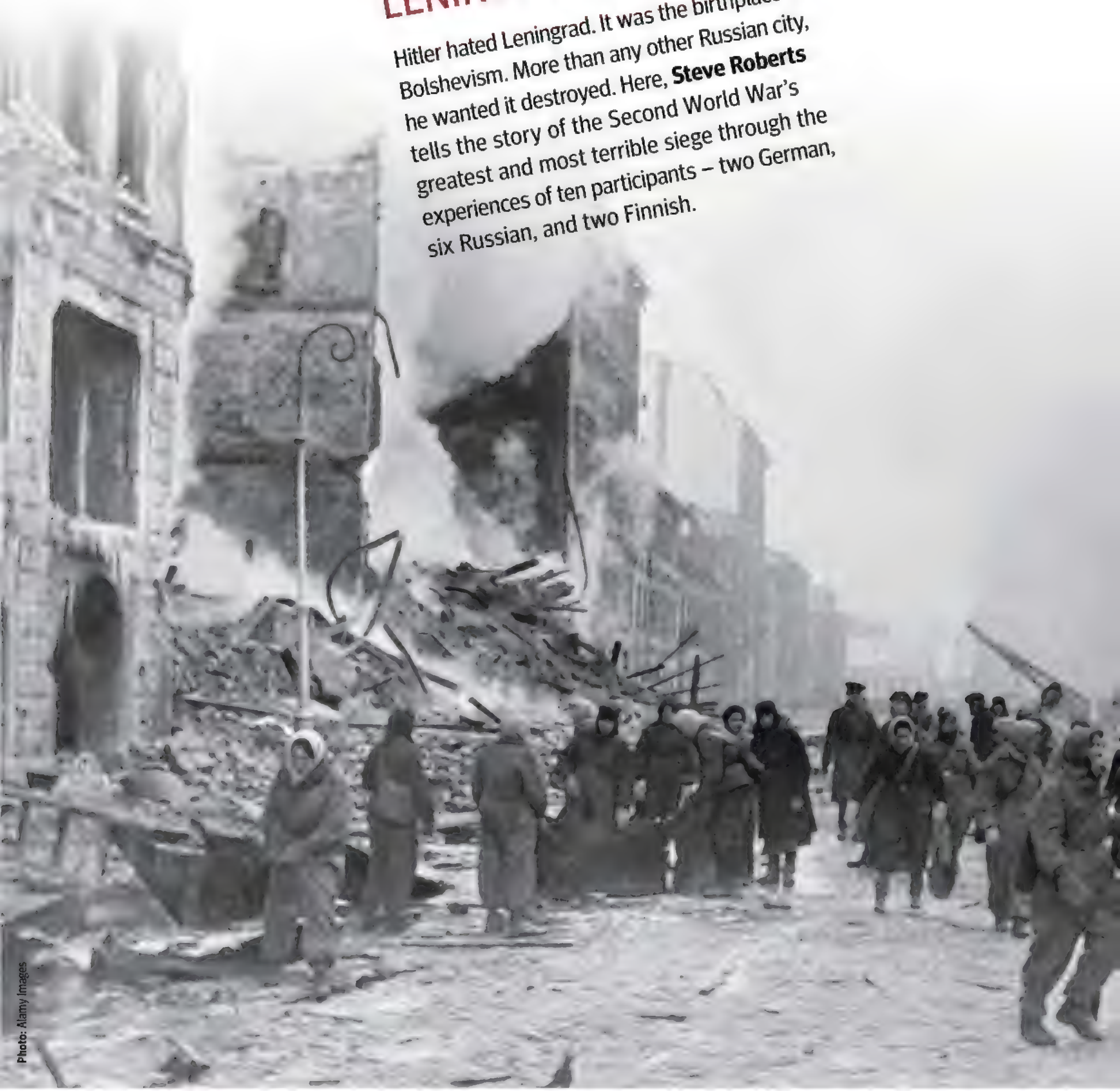
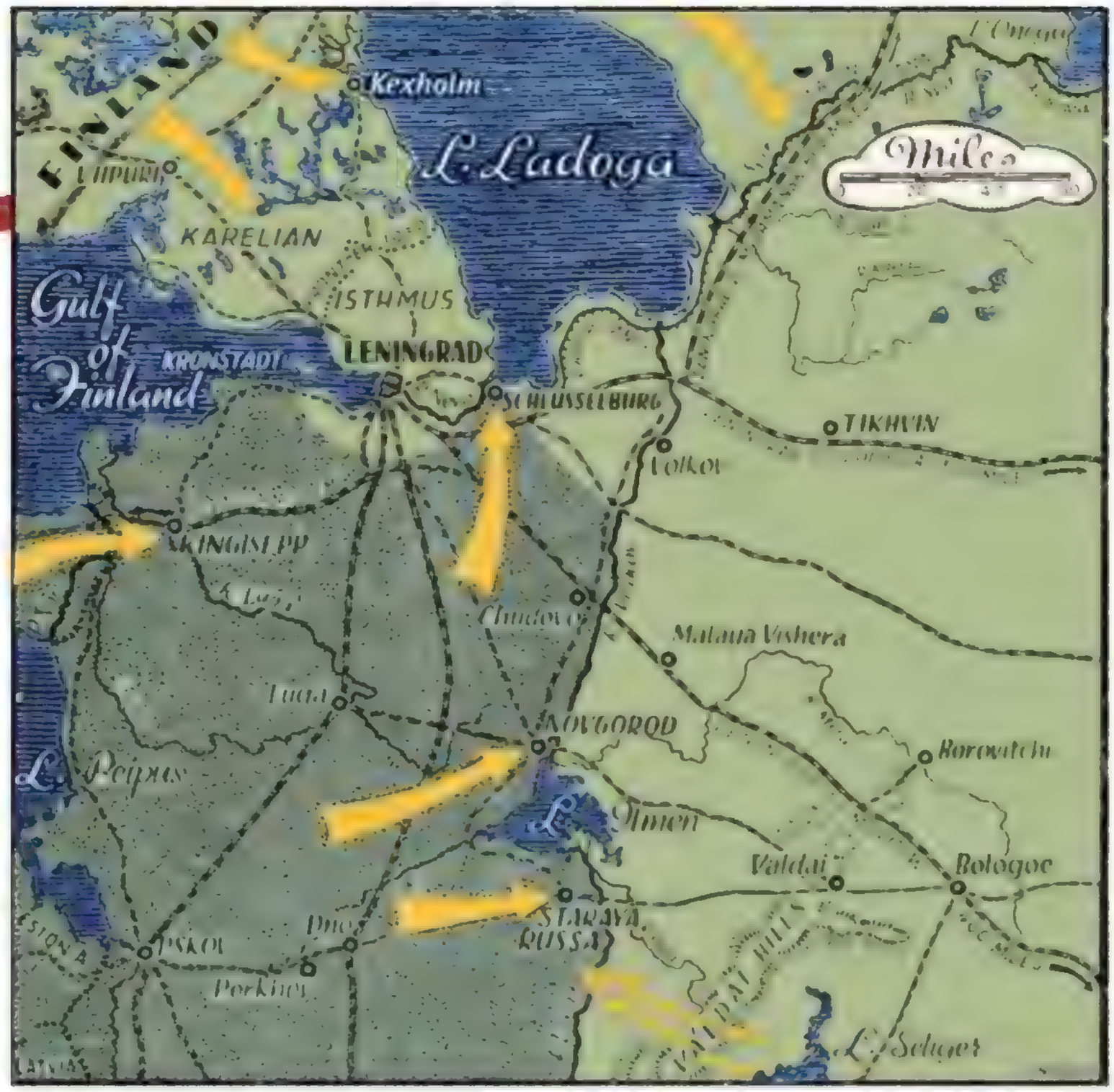


Photo: Alamy Images

Below The city's inhabitants clear away ruins and extinguish fires after Nazi bombardments at the siege of Leningrad, 1943.



NAZIS

Ritter von Leeb

Hitler chose von Leeb for command of Army Group North's assault on Leningrad because he was credited with having broken the supposedly impregnable Maginot Line. Hitler wanted the same done to the Stalin Line in Russia – the main obstacle before Leningrad.

A great believer in speed, von Leeb advanced 900km, breached the Stalin Line, and surrounded Leningrad within three months. 'Don't stop for anything. Never let the enemy consolidate, once he has been thrown back,' he told his soldiers.

Von Leeb then requested reinforcements, as debate raged as to whether Leningrad or Moscow was the primary objective. On 5 September 1941 Hitler decreed that if Leningrad were not captured in ten days, troops would be redeployed to Moscow. This was a crucial moment for the city: the Germans would never again have sufficient firepower to launch an all-out assault.

But by 24 September, with his troops only 15km from the Winter Palace, it was clear that von Leeb's assault had failed. He allowed his exhausted and over-extended forces to adopt defensive positions. He had lost 190,000 men killed or wounded to get this far, and 500 guns and 700 tanks had been lost. Soviet casualties were even heavier.

With a siege under way, von Leeb showed his callousness by issuing orders for his artillery to fire on any fleeing civilians. This was to spare his infantry having to deal with Russian citizens at close quarters. 'It is the task of the artillery to deal with such a situation and as far away from our own lines as possible, preferably by firing on the civilians at an early stage.' This was in accordance with Hitler's edict that Leningrad would not be allowed to surrender and that anyone trying to escape would be shot.

On the Eastern Front, the close of 1941 was a turning-point. Leningrad was encircled but not taken and the Germans had also pulled up short of Moscow. With the onset of winter, there was no choice other than to dig in. Hitler was furious. After an angry meeting with him on 13 January 1942, von Leeb asked to be relieved of command.

After the war von Leeb got off lightly: he was sentenced to only three years in prison at Nuremberg. ▷

Above Operation Barbarossa and the German attack on Leningrad. The map shows the tightening of the German vice around Leningrad.

All photos: © WiPL, unless otherwise stated

Left The Commissar Order in action. The Nazis ordered that all captured Communist Party officials were to be summarily shot.
Below Russia's vast distances and the speed of the German advance in the summer and autumn of 1941 left the invaders exhausted and over-extended.

COMMUNISTS

Kliment Voroshilov

On the 11 July 1941 Voroshilov took over command of the North-Western Front, becoming responsible for Leningrad's defence. His approach was flawed from the start, since he insisted on defending the Luga Line in an effort to stop the German advance as far from the city as possible. Other options were not considered.

Within a week Voroshilov had hundreds of thousands of civilians, mostly women and teenagers, working on this defensive line, which was already within German artillery range.

Voroshilov then made a fateful decision. A rail convoy of food was heading towards the city, but, perhaps concerned about negative impressions, Voroshilov turned it away. The effect was to condemn hundreds of thousands to death. The error was compounded when Voroshilov failed to act on warnings to disperse existing food stocks throughout the city: Luftwaffe bombs then destroyed the Badaev food warehouses. Stalin summoned Voroshilov to Moscow for a 'carpeting' – which he was lucky to survive.

Voroshilov gambled on defending a line south-west of the city, but the Germans outflanked this as they poured in from the south. His response was to order the formation of Home Guard battalions on 20 August, including women and teenagers 'armed with hunting guns, home-made explosives, and sabres and daggers from Leningrad's museums'. It was like trying to stop a tank with a peashooter.

By the end of August, Stalin was sufficiently concerned to send in agents to spy on his commander's operations. The Russian dictator was left in no doubt about the chaos. Crucial matters such as artillery defence and the evacuation of civilians and industry had been neglected.

There was no doubting Voroshilov's foolhardiness. On the 8 September he had

Georg von Küchler

On 17 January 1942 von Leeb was replaced by Georg von Küchler, a solid and methodical commander, but also a fervent Nazi and hater of Communists.

He launched the Luftwaffe's biggest air raid on 5 April against the Baltic Fleet, which was supporting the city with heavy artillery fire, but was also frozen-up in the Baltic ice and very vulnerable. A battleship, three cruisers, and a destroyer were put out of action.

Von Küchler reiterated the invading army's infamous Commissar Order which declared that all Communist Party officials were to be shot. He also circulated the Reichenau Order, which stated that 'feeding native inhabitants from army kitchens is a misguided humanitarian act'.

On the ground Soviet counter-attacks aimed at battering German supply-lines only resulted in the destruction of the 2nd Shock Army. On 30 June a delighted Hitler promoted von Küchler to field marshal.

As the time approached for the Russians to throw the Germans back from Leningrad, von Küchler became aware of the massive enemy build-up. But he was powerless to prevent it. He prepared to fall back to positions 150 miles to the west, known as the Panther Line.

On 30 November 1943 von Küchler stated that the civilian population in the occupied zone east of the Panther Line was to be evacuated and he was not fussed how it was done. 'No consideration will be given to preserving the unity of families. No horse-drawn transport will be provided.'

In spite of being in command for two years, von Küchler was unable to take the city. In 1944 he was approached about joining the July plot to assassinate Hitler, but declined. It was the same month that von Küchler's Panther Line was broken.

After the war von Küchler was sentenced to 20 years for maltreatment of Soviet partisans, but was released after eight on compassionate grounds.

Above A Russian armoured train heads for the front in the early days of the campaign.

signed orders to scuttle the Baltic Fleet, including all its valuable guns. On his last day in command, 11 September, he turned up at the front-line waving a pistol about, encouraging his men to fight. On the same day he was summarily dismissed.

On Stalin's death in 1953 Voroshilov would become Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

Elena Martilla

Young Elena Martilla, a talented portrait artist, swapped easel for other tools as she helped on the city's defences and in its hospitals. Keen not to neglect her talent, however, she also enrolled in the last functioning art academy.

In November 1941 her teacher gave her the assignment of going out and making sketches, to record the siege for posterity. Elena had to devise a strategy, as daytime temperatures were below zero, so a quick outdoor sketch, followed by work at her flat, were required.

Being on the streets was dangerous, too, and the young artist frequently had to take cover in bomb shelters.

Elena recounted the story of a young boy of nine or ten, who had been left behind when a factory's workforce was evacuated and was now foraging the streets on his own. Children who had lost their families and were alone, ageing beyond their years, touched Elena.

The siege was tough on the elderly, too. The oldest person in Elena's block died, but only after smashing the china and searching desperately for bread crumbs among the broken pieces.

Elena found walking the city ever more difficult. 'I would stop and want to rest, but I knew it was too dangerous. If I did, I might never get up.' She fainted several times a day with starvation sickness. When Elena felt she might give up, she turned to self-portraiture as a way of galvanising herself.

By February 1942, cannibalism was ever-present. 'It had become dangerous to make a journey through the city,' Elena said. 'It was becoming increasingly difficult to trust others.' She continued to sketch, including gaunt figures in the library. 'Some of them died in their places, with a book propped up in front of them.'

With the threat of infection, a clear-up of the streets was ordered in March. 'Anyone who was able to walk or even crawl got outside and began working.' For Elena this collective effort was the turning-point for the city.

For years Elena was forced to hide her sketchbook from the NKVD, the Stalinist secret police, her work being viewed as too 'pessimistic'. In 1991, however, she received an invitation from a leading gallery to exhibit her work. The gallery was in Berlin.

Georgy Zhukov

On 11 September Zhukov was flown in on Stalin's orders to take over the defence of the city. He arrived to find a mood of defeatism, which he countered by declaring that the city would be defended to the last man.

Deploying the 338 large guns of the Baltic Fleet for extra armament, he divided the city into defensive sectors and organised the digging of trenches. He stated that any soldier withdrawing would be shot. 'Attack! Not one step backwards!' became his mantra. Russian casualties multiplied as Zhukov extended this to include the families of deserters.

He had a reputation for cruelty and wasted thousands of lives in counter-attacks that were doomed to failure. His worst decision was continuing to order massed attacks from a tiny foothold the Russians had on the east bank of the Neva, the Nevsky Bridgehead, which became a killing ground. Zhukov refused to accept that the Germans were hunkering down for a siege and continued attacking an enemy he believed was intent on capturing the city. Frontal assault against an army now dug in was suicidal. ▷

TIMELINE
The siege of Leningrad

1940

19 December	Risto Ryti becomes President of Finland

1941

6 June	The Commissar Order
22 June	Germany invades the Soviet Union
29 June	Construction of Luga Line fortifications begins, together with evacuation of women and children
11 July	Voroshilov appointed commander of North-Western Front, taking over Leningrad's defences
14 July	Reinhardt's Panzers establish a bridgehead on the far side of the Luga River, opening the gates to Leningrad
19 July	First attack on Leningrad by Army Group North stopped 100km south of city
27 July	Hitler visits Army Group North and orders von Leeb to take Leningrad by December
31 July	Finns attack the Soviet 23rd Army at Karelian Isthmus
8 August	Von Leeb begins attack on Luga Line
15/16 August	Manstein turns the Soviet position at Lake Ilmen, allowing a German advance on Leningrad from the south-east
18 August	Lychkovo train massacre: the Luftwaffe bombs a trainload of child evacuees from Leningrad
21 August	Hitler orders the encirclement of Leningrad in conjunction with the Finns
30 August	German forces cut the strategic Moscow–Leningrad railway and other connections to Leningrad
6 September	Alfred Jodl of the German High Command fails to persuade the Finns to continue their offensive
8 September	Germans capture Shlisselburg, blockading Leningrad and beginning the siege
	Badaev food warehouses are destroyed by incendiary bombs
11 September	Voroshilov is replaced by Zhukov
12 September	The largest food depot in Leningrad, Badajevski General Store, destroyed
15 September	Von Leeb transfers 4th Panzer Group to Moscow offensive
17 September	Zhukov issues Command Order that anyone retreating is to be shot
19 September	German troops stopped 10km from Leningrad
20 September	Zhukov sends Soviet forces across Neva to establish Nevsky Bridgehead

TIMELINE
The siege of Leningrad

1941 *continued*

22 September	Hitler states all offers of surrender from Leningrad are to be rejected
5 October	Zhukov ordered back to Moscow; Zhdanov is left in charge
8 November	Germans capture Tikhvin, severing the last rail route into the city
	Hitler states Leningrad must 'die of starvation'
10 November	Soviet counter-attack begins
22 November	First convoy of lorries brings supplies across Lake Ladoga
10 December	Red Army recaptures Tikhvin

1942

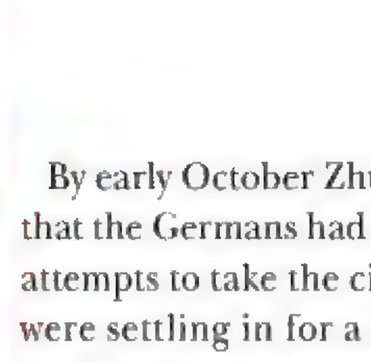
1 January	Leningrad down to two days' supply
7 January	Soviet Lyuban Offensive launched
8 Janury	First hospital opens for treatment of starvation
17 January	Von Leeb replaced by von Küchler in command of Army Group North
25 January	Last working hydroelectric power station closes, leaving Leningrad without running water, heat, or electricity
26 January	Leningrad's Musical Comedy Theatre closes due to collapse of electricity system
27 January	Food supply and distribution breaks down
29 January	Death of Olga Berggolts' husband from starvation
18 February	First reports of dysentery
27 March	All able-bodied citizens clean streets and courtyards
30 March	First rehearsal for Shostakovich's 7th Symphony takes place
1 April	Govorov takes command of Leningrad front
5 April	Germans launch an air attack on the Baltic Fleet
15 April	Tram services resume on three routes into the city
27 April	Last Soviet defenders on the Nevsky Bridgehead are overrun
4 June	Hitler visits Ryti and Mannerheim in Finland; Mannerheim granted the title Marshal of Finland
18 June	Fuel pipeline laid across Lake Ladoga, bringing petrol into Leningrad
27 June	Mannerheim visits Germany

By early October Zhukov conceded that the Germans had abandoned their attempts to take the city by storm and were settling in for a long siege. 'For the first time in many days we could tangibly feel that the front had fulfilled its mission and halted the Nazi offensive on Leningrad.'

He might have drawn this conclusion earlier and saved thousands of lives. Autumn 1941, when the Germans were stopped in front of Leningrad, would nonetheless become part of Zhukov's legend. Stalin then recalled him to Moscow – probably a blessing for the defenders.

Many believe Zhukov to have been Russia's most effective general during WWII. As well as improving Leningrad's defences, he organised the evacuation of some 1.5 million civilians and co-ordinated the operations that led to the breaking of the siege in January 1943.

Zhukov also played a major role in saving Moscow and in the encirclement of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad. As the Red Army marched through Eastern Europe, all the way to Berlin, it fell to him to accept the German surrender.



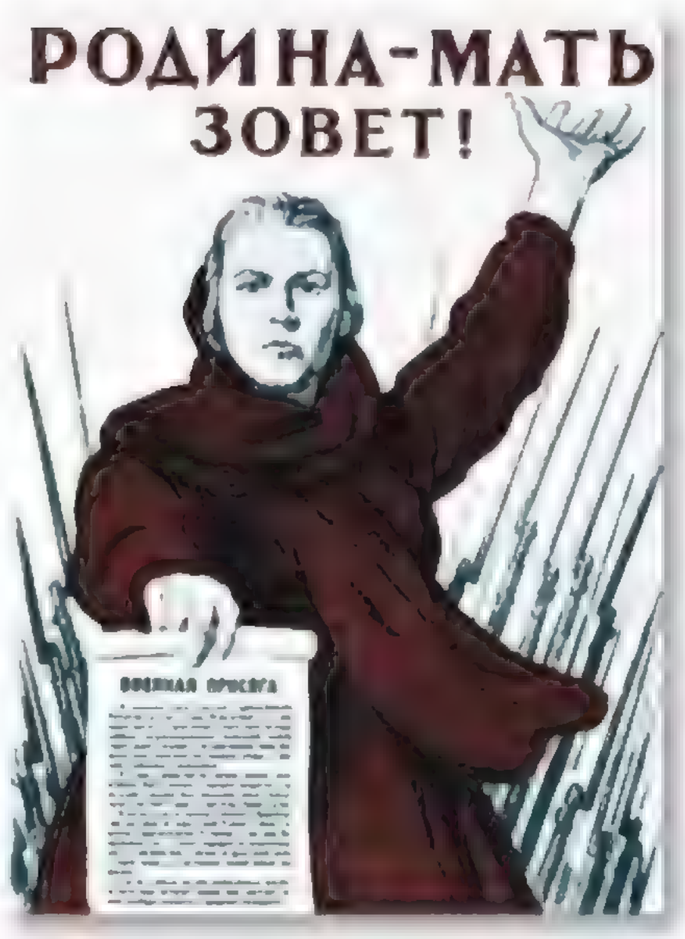
Karl Eliasberg

The greatest symbol of Leningrad's defiance came on 9 August 1942, when Dmitry Shostakovich's 7th Symphony was played at the city's Philharmonic Hall. The music had been flown in by military plane so that it could be performed in the city.

It was Eliasberg himself who took the decision to perform the symphony, dedicated to Leningrad, in the besieged city. The Germans were trying to isolate Leningrad not just from the rest of Russia, but from the rest of the world, and this was Eliasberg's attempt to reach out.

He was chronically short of musicians, however, with the first rehearsal attended by only 25 out of 80. Some army musicians joined in, attending rehearsals then going back to man their guns. Eliasberg may have been a hard taskmaster, but he made the whole thing happen. Although the musicians were worn out, they responded to his sheer determination.

On the evening of the performance, the hall was packed. Eliasberg spoke on the radio at 6pm. 'In a few minutes you will hear for the first time the 7th Symphony of our fellow citizen Dmitry



Above One of the most famous Soviet propaganda posters of the war: Mother Russia summons her children to the defence of the homeland. Nowhere was the struggle – racial and political as well as military – more visceral than during the siege of Leningrad.

Shostakovich. This performance is proof of our spirit, courage, and readiness to resist.' According to the conductor, 'people just stood and cried'.

After the war Eliasberg spoke to some German veterans who told him that they had intercepted Russian radio signals and listened in. They admitted that they knew that evening that they would never take the city.

Eliasberg later wrote, 'Those moments do not come often. I cannot explain the feeling I had. The glory of fame and the grief of loss. The thought that maybe the brightest moments of your life are gone. The city now lives a peaceful life, but no one has the right to forget the past.'

Leonid Govorov

On 1 April 1942 Govorov took over command of the Leningrad front. A brilliant artilleryman, he turned around the military situation in the city.

Govorov built up ammunition stocks. The shells available to batteries rose from 800 to 5,000 per month. The Red Army deployed real firepower for the first time. Govorov knew that the key was precise counter-battery fire against German gun emplacements. 'We must hit them before they hit us.'

Govorov needed to know where German guns were located so he employed 'decoys' – brave gun crews who fired, then dived for cover as the Germans retaliated.

Govorov helped Eliasberg, the conductor, with his plan to perform

Shostakovich's 7th Symphony in the city. Knowing he was short of musicians, Govorov allowed Red Army participation. Also, before the performance, he ordered a bombardment of German positions. Determined that the concert should lift Russian morale and shatter the enemy's, he had radio transmitter dishes set up, so everyone heard.

Govorov was thorough in his preparations for Operation Spark, which broke the blockade in January 1943. Mock-ups of enemy positions were created to give the Red Army assault practice, and firing ranges were set up to improve gunnery. At 9.30am on 12 January, the assault began.

Govorov showed his humanity and courage by disobeying orders to attack strong German positions on the Sinyavino Heights: a potential suicide mission for his men.

On the morning of 18 January, Govorov's troops made contact with Soviet forces advancing from the east, finally breaking – but not yet lifting – the siege of Leningrad. It was to be another year before the Germans were pushed back completely.

In the autumn of 1943, Govorov supervised preparations for the final battle, assembling 21,000 guns, over 1,500 rocket launchers, and some 600 anti-aircraft guns – the biggest concentration of firepower ever assembled in Russia, and one that ensured overwhelming superiority over the enemy.

On 15 January 1944, the final assault began. Over half a million shells and rockets were launched in 2½ hours. It was the war's heaviest barrage. By the 22nd the Germans were retreating. At 8pm on 27 January, Govorov was able to declare Leningrad liberated.

Govorov, the 'real hero' of Leningrad, was promoted to marshal of the Soviet Union. He was to die from chronic heart disease in 1955 and was buried in the wall of the Kremlin.

Olga Berggolts

Helping others motivated people to survive. This underpinned the poetry and radio broadcasts of Olga Berggolts. She read to unite the people of Leningrad and distract them from their suffering.

Olga had plenty of worries of her own. Her own elderly father was carted off to Siberia in early 1942, possibly for having a Jewish surname, or because he refused to inform on colleagues. The Nazis did not have a monopoly on prejudice or brutality.

On 29 January 1942, Olga's husband died of starvation. Olga had to transport his body to the cemetery herself on a child's sledge. Nevertheless, it was Olga who sustained the citizens during the dark days of February 1942. 'I will talk to you during the artillery fire, lit by its glow,' she said. 'I will love and I will live.' Olga recited extracts from 'February Diary', a poem written during the siege's first winter.

Elena Martilla, the artist, said of Berggolts, 'We listened to her every day. It was a light for us at the end of a long, dark tunnel.' Olga said, 'Their only connection with the outside world was the radio. If I brought them a moment's happiness, then my existence is justified.' She became the voice of besieged Leningrad.

'That winter,' stated Olga, 'death looked straight into our eyes. But those who sent us so much death miscalculated. They underestimated our voracious hunger for life.'

When the siege was broken on 18 January 1943, Olga shared in the city's euphoria. 'This happiness, the happiness of liberated Leningrad, we will never forget.'

Stalin did not want unbridled celebrations, however, as he was anxious about attention being drawn to Leningrad's suffering. Olga was invited to Moscow to broadcast siege reflections, but was told not to mention starvation. Heroism was fine, but not hunger.

After the war Olga visited the Piskaryov Memorial Cemetery in Leningrad, where 600,000 lay buried. Her words would be carved on the memorial, 'Know you who gaze upon these stones, none is forgotten and nothing is forgotten.' Olga's husband was buried there. ▷

Left The people of Leningrad at work digging defence-works.

TIMELINE
The siege of Leningrad

1942 *continued*	
30 June	Von Küchler promoted to field marshal
9 August	Performance of Shostakovich's 7th Symphony at Leningrad's Philharmonic Hall
19 August	Soviets begin the Sinyavino Offensive
4 September	Manstein diverts forces intended for a fresh assault on the city to fight a battle of attrition south of Lake Ladoga
1943	
12 January	Operation Iskra (Spark) begins
15 January	Govorov promoted to colonel-general
18 January	Operation Spark breaks blockade
	Zhukov made marshal of the Soviet Union
22 January	Front line stabilised
28 January	Govorov awarded Order of Suvorov 1st Class
6 February	First trainload of provisions reaches the city via overland route
10 February	Operation Polyarnaya Zvesda attempts to lift the siege
21 September	Army Group North prepares fall-back position 150 miles west of Leningrad
17 November	Govorov promoted to army general
1944	
15 January	Soviet assault against remaining German siege positions
27 January	Govorov's offensive secures the complete liberation of Leningrad, bringing the 872-day siege to an end
9 June	Soviet counter-offensive against Finland commences
1 August	Ryti resigns from office
4 August	Mannerheim becomes Finnish President
1945	
27 January	Govorov awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union
4 March	Mannerheim resigns as Finnish President
1948	
27 October	Von Küchler is sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for mistreatment of Soviet partisans
1951	
27 January	Death of Mannerheim, aged 83, in Switzerland
1955	
19 March	Death of Govorov, aged 58

> That winter, death looked straight into our eyes. But those who sent us so much death miscalculated. They underestimated our voracious hunger for life.
>
> *Olga Berggolts*

TIMELINE
The siege of Leningrad

1956

29 April Death of von Leeb, aged 79, following a heart attack

Death of Ryti, aged 67

1968

25 May Death of von Küchler, aged 86

1969

2 December Death of Voroshilov, aged 88

1974

18 June Death of Zhukov, aged 77, following a stroke

1975

Death of Olga Berggolts, aged 65

1978

Death of Karl Eliasberg, aged 70

1991

Elena Martilla's siege sketches exhibited in Berlin

FINNS

Risto Ryti

Finland had been at war with Russia for three months from the end of November 1939 ('the Winter War'). Russia had invaded Finland and secured 11% of Finnish territory and a buffer zone to protect Leningrad.

Ryti became the fifth President of Finland in December 1940. He had to decide which side to back when war between Germany and Russia broke out, and opted for Germany as most likely to prevail. The Finns prepared to re-annex the lands they had lost in the Winter War.

When Germany attacked Russia, Finland remained officially neutral until Soviet air raids gave Ryti the excuse to launch 'the Continuation War'. Finnish troops regained the territory previously lost and more.

The Germans applied pressure on Ryti in September 1941 to continue his offensive, but without success. 'The Germans aimed at us crossing the old border and at continuation of the offensive to Leningrad. I said that the capture of Leningrad wasn't our goal and that we shouldn't take part.'

The Russians did not know what exchanges had taken place between the Germans and the Finns, however, so the mere threat of a Finnish attack complicated the defence of the city.

Ryti eventually faced a dilemma, as come the winter of 1942 he was having serious doubts about Germany's ability to win the war with Russia.

When Russia's major counter-offensive against Finland began on 9 June 1944, the Finns faced hostility from both Germany, angry at Finnish attempts to secure a separate peace with Russia, and the latter, eager for revenge. Russia wanted unconditional surrender from the Finns, who continued to fight, buoyed by military aid from the Germans, desperate to keep them in the war.

Ryti resigned as President on 1 August 1944, citing health reasons, which gave his successor a free hand to end the informal alliance with Germany and pursue peace negotiations with the Soviets.

In spring 1945, the Soviets and the Finnish Communists demanded that Ryti stand trial for his role during the war. He was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, but was pardoned in 1949.

Carl Mannerheim

Mannerheim became Finnish commander-in-chief in the Winter War at the venerable age of 72, when he proved himself to be the best winter general in the business.

Before the Continuation War, the Germans offered to give Mannerheim command of 80,000 German troops, which he declined for fear of being associated too closely with the Nazi war effort.

By the end of August 1941, Leningrad was three-quarters surrounded. With their pre-Winter War boundaries recovered, the Finns were advancing along the north-eastern shore of Lake Ladoga. On 31 August, Mannerheim gave the order to stop the attack when the 1939 border had been reached.

Mannerheim cannily kept the Germans at bay, and refused to allow his troops to participate in the siege. But for this act of forbearance, it is possible that Leningrad's defences might have crumbled. The Finnish halt left the south-western shore of Lake Ladoga in Russian hands. As the German noose tightened, the Russians used the lake – when it froze – as the only remaining supply-route, the famous 'Road of Life'.

Hitler used the occasion of Mannerheim's 75th birthday on 4 June 1942 to visit him and try to persuade him to step up military operations, but without success.

Mannerheim was an astute politician, and knew that the vital question was when to open peace negotiations with Russia. Too early and they risked German reprisals, too late and Soviet occupation of Finland would result.

Mannerheim took over as President on 4 August 1944. With Germany now weak enough not to pose a threat, peace negotiations began with Russia. The Continuation War was concluded on harsh terms, but at least Finland retained its sovereignty.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Roberts is a freelance writer and historian.

Further information

Two good recent studies of the Siege of Leningrad are *Leningrad: state of siege* (2008) by Michael Jones and Anna Reid's *Leningrad: tragedy of a city under siege* (2011).

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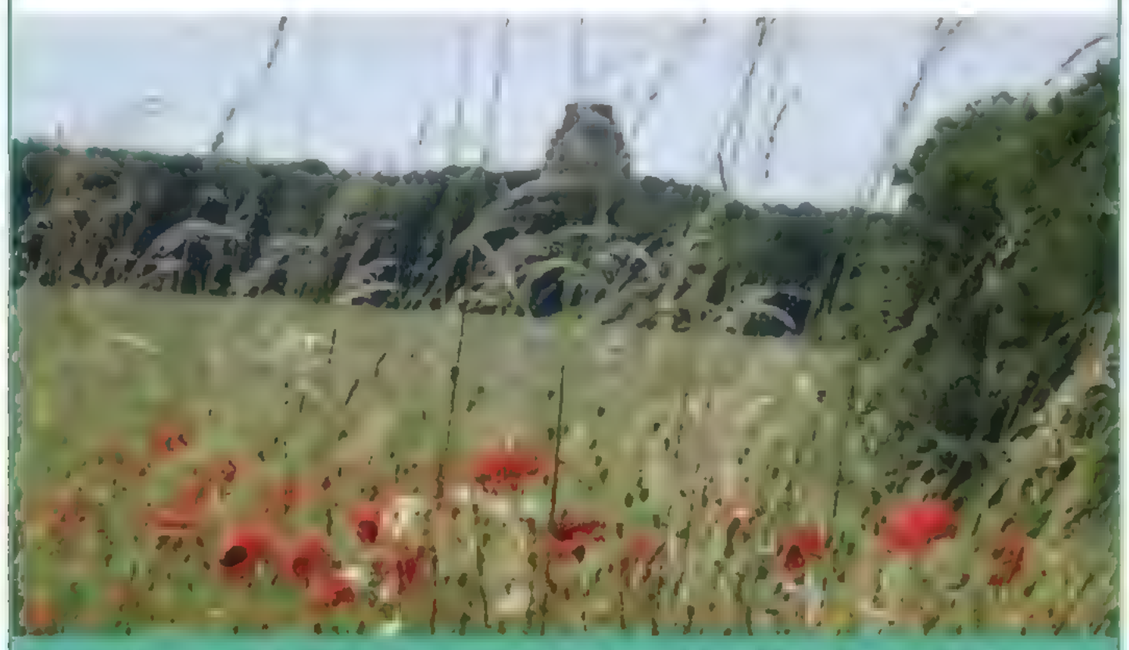

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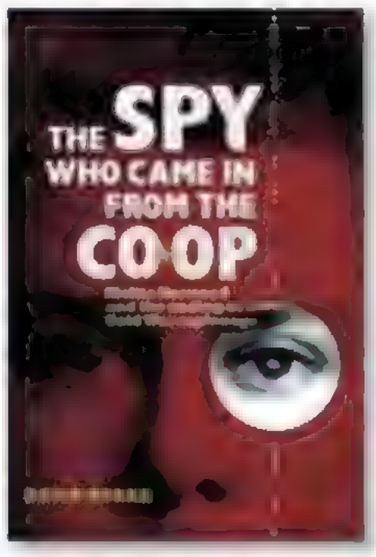

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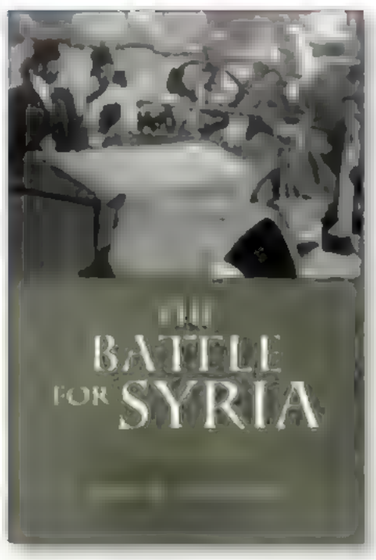

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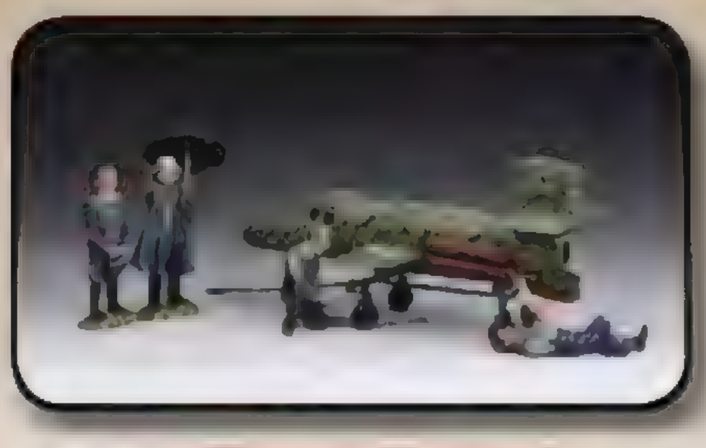

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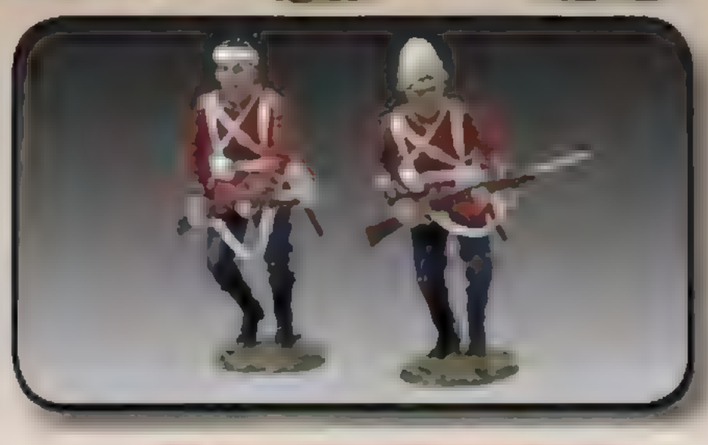

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1/30TH SCALE

Left 'Churchill's New Year Hangover' by Erich Schilling (*Simplicissimus*, 1 January 1942) has a bleary-eyed Churchill surrounded by alleycats whose collars indicate recent Allied disasters: Pearl Harbor, the Balkans, Siam, and Russia, plus the names of two British warships recently sunk off Singapore, HMS *Repulse* and HMS *Prince of Wales*. The caption reads: 'Damn, look how my lies-and-illusions punch has been received!'

WITZKRIEG!

GERMAN CARTOONISTS OF THE NAZI ERA, 1933-1945

Mark Bryant looks at those elusive masters of Nazi propaganda, the German cartoonists of the Second World War.

Though a fair amount has been written about Allied cartoonists and caricaturists working during the Second World War, very little has been published about their Nazi counterparts and the contributions they made to Axis propaganda during the conflict. Part of the reason has been the difficulty in identifying who they were – many either did not sign their work or used pseudonyms, and even those who worked under their real names were later keen to distance themselves from their wartime drawings in order to avoid censure and possible imprisonment by the Allies. None the less, some notable artists of this period can now be identified.

Germany has a great tradition of pictorial satire going back at least to the 18th century. Its artists have been published in a number of internationally respected humorous magazines such as *Fliegende Blätter* (1845) and *Kladderadatsch* (1848) – both set up soon after *Punch* was founded – as well as *Lustige Blätter* (1888), *Simplicissimus* (1896), and others. In addition, their work has appeared in a wide variety of other media including newspapers, books, posters, postcards, and advertisements.

Adolf Hitler was very aware of the power of cartoons. As he said in *Mein Kampf*, 'At one stroke... people will understand a pictorial presentation of something which it would take them a long and laborious effort of reading to understand.'

The Nazis' Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels even complained about British cartoons saying, 'British caricatures of German types are insulting, because they are no longer truthful. The National Socialists have completely transformed the German people.' He also kept files of press-cuttings of anti-German drawings by Leslie Illingworth of the *Daily Mail* and David Low of the *Evening Standard*, among others. The names of a number of these British cartoonists appeared on the Nazis' Black List, indicating those who would be executed first in the event of a German victory in the war.

Nazis take control

It thus comes as no surprise that as soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933 they cracked down on dissenting cartoonists in Germany, and took control of many publications. Some artists, especially the Jewish ones, saw the writing on the wall and made their escape.

Thomas Theodor Heine (1867-1948), editor and co-founder of *Simplicissimus*, as well as its most prolific cover artist, had been imprisoned for six months in 1898 for an anti-Kaiser cartoon. He left soon after Hitler's election as Chancellor and eventually settled in Stockholm.

The Czech-born Walter Trier (1890-1951), staff cartoonist on *Lustige Blätter* and illustrator of Erich Kästner's famous children's book *Emil and the Detectives*, left Germany shortly after seeing Kästner's works, as well as some of his own books, burnt in Berlin by the Nazis as 'subversive literature'. He

Nor-
way
I have helped the Norwegians . . .
Holland
Belgium
. . . the Dutch and the Belgians also . . .
France
. . . and I particularly helped the French!
But now who is going to help me?

Above An anonymous German wartime propaganda postcard showing John Bull stealing from his allies. **Left** This drawing by Bogner, from the SS weekly *Das Schwarze Korps* (12 March 1942), comments on Rommel's success against the British in North Africa. A trapped British unicorn is shown about to be given the coup de grâce by a falling coconut bomb while a sign points to the destruction of the Far East. The one-word caption reads: 'Ridiculous'.

moved to London, where he achieved fame as the cover artist for *Lilliput* magazine from its foundation in 1937.

Victor Weisz ('Vicky', 1913-1966), later to create the image of Harold Macmillan as 'Supermac', managed to flee to Budapest and then London, when his paper, *Das 12 Uhr Blatt*, was taken over by the Nazis. However, a fellow Berliner, Willi Wolpe ('Wooping', 1904-1958), was not so lucky. During his imprisonment he was tortured and lost an eye before being released in 1936, after which he fled to Czechoslovakia and then, in 1939, to London (where, ironically, he was interned at first as an 'enemy alien').

Sticking to their guns?

For those cartoonists and caricaturists who remained in Germany, most either accepted the Nazi regime reluctantly or changed their allegiance and became enthusiastic supporters of it.

Among the former were such distinguished pre-war artists as Karl Arnold (1883-1953), Paul Weber (1893-1980), Wilhelm Schulz (1865-1952), the Norwegian-born Olaf Gulbransson (1873-1958), and the Austrian-born Eduard Thöny (1866-1950).

Another was Erich Ohser (1903-1944), who worked as 'E O Plauen' (a combination of his initials and the name of the town in which he was brought up). Born on 18 March 1903, the son of a customs official, he studied at the Academy of Graphic Art in Leipzig where he met Erich Kästner and illustrated Kästner's first volumes of poetry. He then began contributing to various newspapers in Leipzig before moving to Berlin. When the Nazis came to power he was at first forbidden to work as a political cartoonist, and so drew the 'Vater und Sohn' ('Father and Son') wordless strip for the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (1934-1937). It was very successful (even being used in Nazi propaganda campaigns) and three books of the drawings (1935, 1936, and 1938) were published.

From 1940, he also drew political cartoons for *Das Reich*. However, by 1944 he had become increasingly anti-Nazi and was arrested by the Gestapo. He committed suicide (aged 41) in Moabit Prison, Berlin, during the night of 5 April 1944, only hours before his trial (which would have sentenced him to death).

The painter, illustrator and cartoonist Willibald Krain (1886-1945) had a similar experience of the Nazis at first. Born in Breslau on 11 December 1886, he was brought up in Silesia and studied painting in Breslau and Munich. He worked for *Kladderadatsch* and the socialist magazines *Der Wahre Jakob* and *Lachen Links*, among others, and attended Hitler's 1924 trial after the Munich Putsch as a court sketch-artist for the *Berliner Illustrierte*.

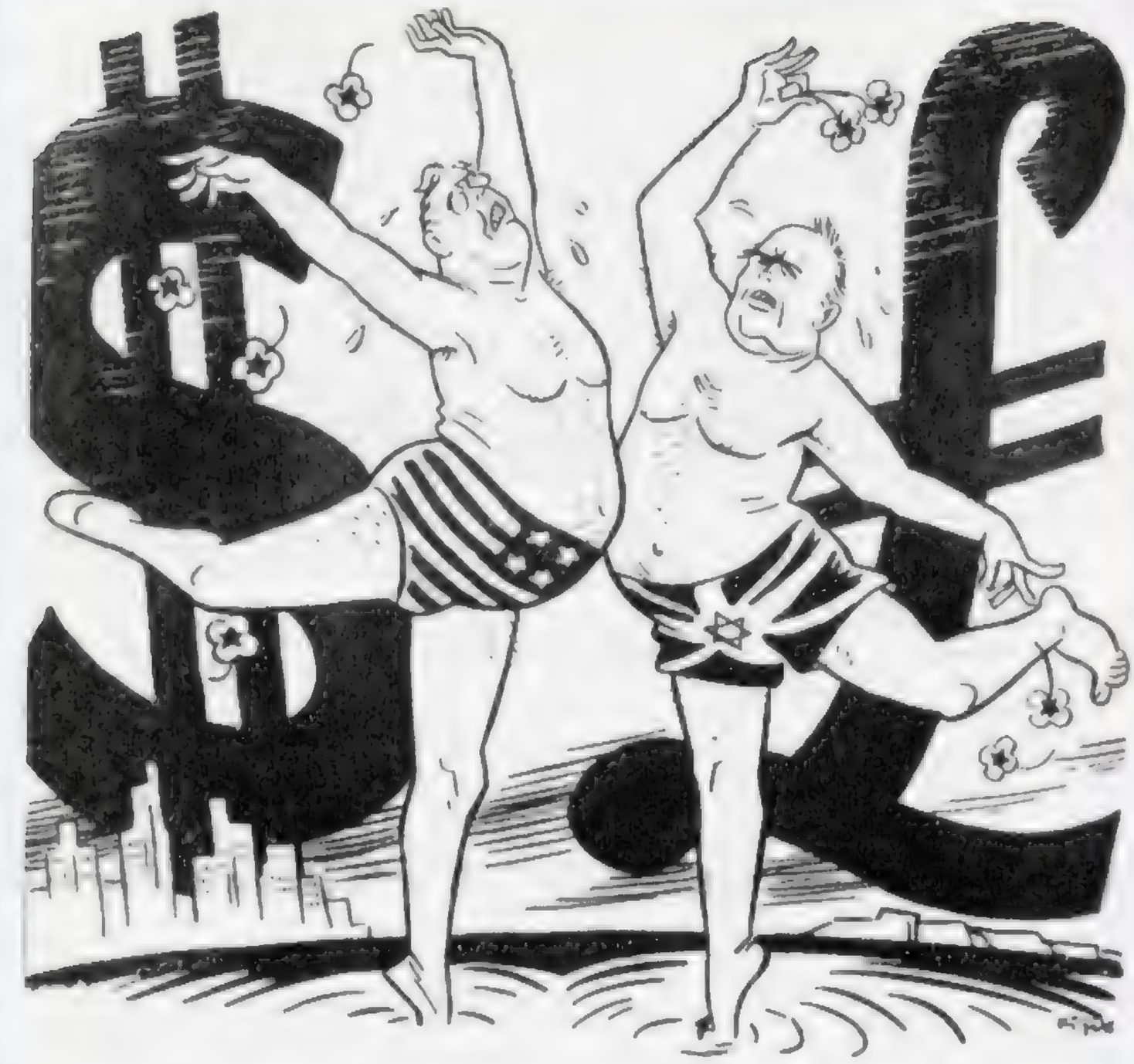
Prohibited from drawing when the Nazis came to power, he later went along with the regime and was thereafter allowed to contribute propaganda cartoons (including some anti-Semitic work) to the German press. At the end of the war, he served in the Volkssturm (Home Guard) and was captured by the Red Army. While on a prisoner transport, he received a gunshot wound from which he died in a Dresden hospital on 11 September 1945.

Changing allegiance

Those artists who seemed to have been more willing supporters of the Nazi regime included Philipp Rupprecht ('Fips'), the star artist of Julius Streicher's infamous anti-Semitic weekly *Der Stürmer*; Eric Schilling, Goebbels' favourite cartoonist; Professor Hans Schweitzer (Mjölnir), the Nazis' expert on 'degenerate art'; and Arthur Johnson, the American-born son of the US consul to Hamburg.

Philipp Rupprecht was born in Nuremberg in 1901, served in the German Navy in the First World War, and then moved to Argentina, aged 20, where he worked on a cattle ranch and as a waiter. Returning to Nuremberg in 1925, he began contributing cartoons to the *Fränkische Tagepost*. There he caught the attention of Julius Streicher, who invited him to draw cartoons (including covers) for *Der Stürmer*.

His first cartoon for the paper appeared on 19 December 1925. With the outbreak of war, he served at first in the Kriegsmarine but was ▷



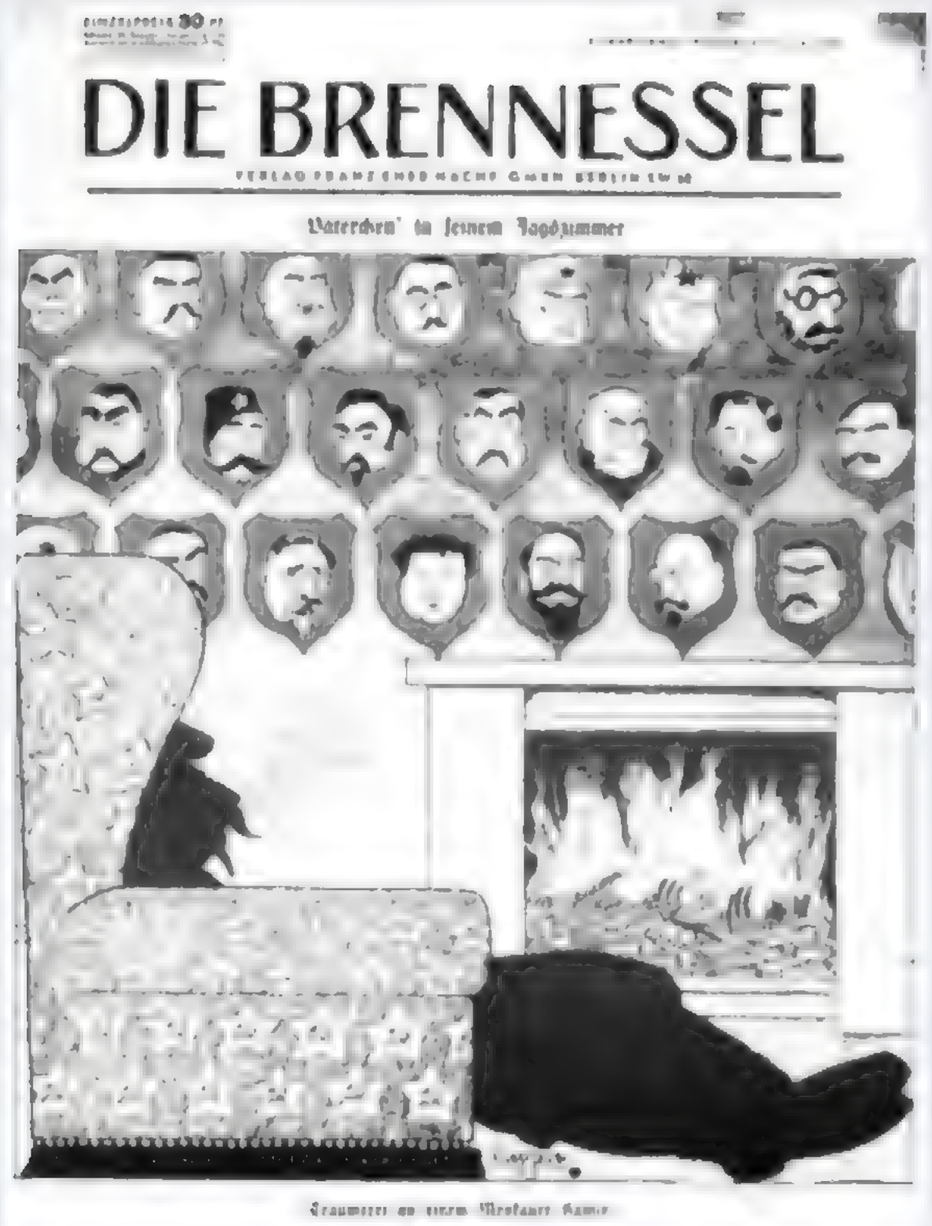
Left Fips' drawing for *Der Stürmer* (4 September 1941) has US President Roosevelt and Churchill dancing strenuously in the middle of the Atlantic in front of huge dollar and pound signs (note the Star of David on Churchill's Union Jack swimming trunks). The caption reads: 'A little while ago Churchill and Mister Roosevelt played at charades. They impersonated "Sirens Bringing Happiness to All the World" and made complete fools of themselves.'

Below This cartoon by Knock appeared in the third issue of the Nazi propaganda broadsheet *Vox*, which lampooned items in Allied newspapers using its own cartoons. Dropped by air, it was published in three languages: English, French, and German. The caption reads: 'Frau Roosevelt recently announced that she would henceforward do her shopping on a bicycle, in order that the benzine should go for defence purposes – here is an illustration of her first benzine-less shopping expedition.'

later released to do wartime propaganda work. He continued to contribute to *Der Stürmer* until its last issue on 2 February 1945. He also illustrated Nazi children's stories by Ernst Hiemer (editor of *Der Stürmer*) and published his own book *Juden Stellen Sich* (*Jews Present Themselves*, 1934).

Eric Schilling was born in Suhl, Thuringia, on 27 February 1885, the fourth child of a gun manufacturer. After serving an apprenticeship with the master engraver Karl Kolb, he worked as a rifle engraver in his father's company. At the age of 18, he went to Berlin to study art at the city's Academy. His first cartoons appeared in *Der Wahre Jakob* and he also contributed to *Simplicissimus* (from 1907), *Kladderadatsch*, and others, often signing his work simply with a capital S. He moved to Munich in 1918 and later became a shareholder in *Simplicissimus*. Formerly vehemently anti-Nazi, in 1933 he became a fervent supporter of Hitler's regime and continued to draw for *Simplicissimus* until it closed in 1944.

'Mjölnir' was the name of Thor's hammer in Norse mythology, and from 1926 to 1945 it was used as the nom de plume of Hans Herbert Schweitzer. Born in Berlin in 1901, the son of a doctor, Schweitzer studied at the Kunsthochschule in the city and was one of the first 30 members of the Berlin Nazi Party (he joined in 1926). A close friend of Joseph Goebbels, he helped set up *Der Angriff* in 1927 and drew cartoons for it. He also contributed to the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Die Brennessel*. In addition, he designed postage stamps and posters, and illustrated a book lampooning quotations from Winston Churchill's speeches. In 1935 he was appointed Reichsbeauftrager für Künstlerische Formgebung (Reich Instructor for Artistic



Above 'Joan of Arc' by Karl Arnold (*Simplicissimus*, 14 July 1940). The Germans entered Paris on 13 June 1940, and by the 21st the French had signed an armistice. Arnold has Joan of Arc floating over Nôtre-Dame cathedral and the ruins of Paris. The caption (which since 28 April 1941 was printed in Italian as well for distribution to Germany's new wartime allies) reads 'Hopefully, France's blood flows for the last time for England!'
Top left 'Seppla' was the pseudonym of Josef Plank, who drew for the *Illustrierte Beobachter* and contributed to the Berlin journal *Die Brennessel* ('The Stinging Nettle') from at least 1931 onwards. This drawing, ' "Little Father" in His Den – Dream in a Moscow Hunting-Lodge' (3 May 1938), has Stalin dozing beside a blazing hearth filled with the bones of his recently purged enemies, their heads mounted above.
Left In Olaf Gulbransson's cartoon, 'British Lion and Gallic Cock' (*Simplicissimus*, 22 October 1939), the artist suggests that French soldiers manning the Maginot Line were being sent first into battle by Churchill. The British Lion says: 'You jump through the hoop first, dear Cock. I shall follow after!'

Shaping) in the Reich Chamber of Culture – responsible for identifying and confiscating so-called 'degenerate art' – and from 1937 had the title of Professor.

The American Arthur Johnson would seem at first to be an unlikely Nazi. He was born in Cincinnatti in 1874, the son of a journalist (who was also the proprietor/editor of the *Cincinnatti Volksblatt*) and his German wife, and studied at the Cincinnatti Art Academy. In 1889, when his father was appointed US Consul to Hamburg, the family moved to Germany, where Johnson continued his studies at the Berlin Academy of Art and was awarded the Prussian Academy's Prix de Rome.

After travelling in Italy, he returned to Berlin to work as a painter. He began contributing to *Kladderadatsch* in 1906, and produced a number of anti-British cartoons for the magazine during the First World War, including 'The Rape of the Germans in England' (1914) which lampooned George V's German descent. At first anti-Nazi, he later became a supporter, and after Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland drew a front-cover cartoon, 'The Seeds of Peace, Not Dragons' Teeth' (*Kladderadatsch*, 22 March 1936), featuring Hitler sowing seeds in front of the angel of peace blowing a trumpet. He worked for *Kladderadatsch* until it too closed in 1944.

Three of these four Nazi cartoonists survived the war. Johnson lived to be 80 (he died in Berlin in 1954) and Schweitzer worked as an illustrator until his death in Landstuhl on 15 September 1980. Rupprecht was sentenced to six years' hard labour in Eichstätt prison by the Allies. Released on 23 October 1950, he then worked as a painter and decorator in Munich, where he died on 4 April 1975.

As for Eric Schilling, he committed suicide in his studio in Munich on 30 April 1945, the day before his great admirer, Joseph Goebbels, did the same in Berlin.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Mark Bryant is the author of *World War II in Cartoons* (1989), *The World's Greatest War Cartoonists and Caricaturists, 1790-1945* (2012), and several other books.

Left Napoleon as First Consul of the First Republic. Both man of the Enlightenment and soldier of the Revolution, Napoleon was intellectually curious and supportive of scientific endeavour – especially where it might enhance the military power of France.

Napoleon's secret weapons

That Hitler was obsessed with secret weapons is well known. As retired scientist Allan Ashworth explains, it seems Napoleon had a similar fascination.

For the benefit of a credulous and terrified readership, the English cartoonist Robert Dighton (1751-1814) drew a remarkable machine. It was a floating island, powered by windmills, capable of carrying 60,000 troops, and armed with no fewer than 600 guns. According to Dighton, this fanciful ship was under construction in 1798, and would spearhead Napoleon's landing on the Kent coast.

There was, of course, no such floating monstrosity. Dighton was no marine architect and knew little about shipbuilding or engineering. What is more, General Bonaparte's 'Army of England' eventually set sail not for the south coast of England, but for Egypt.

With the Royal Navy making it quite impossible for a French army to cross the English Channel, here was a different way to harm France's principal enemy. An attack on Egypt and domination of the Mediterranean might have severe consequences for British trade and even threaten British control of her colonies in India.

More images of special invasion vessels, this time a little more credible, were published in Britain during the invasion scare of 1803. Flat-bottom transports, steam boats, even underwater boats and giant balloons would carry French armies to the Thames Estuary.

France was at the forefront of new technology and science; this was well known from numerous exchanges between the British Royal Society and its French counterpart, a scientific dialogue hardly interrupted by war. Was this new science being used to devise weapons of war? Such was the perception. What was the reality?

> Napoleon privately dismissed Robert Fulton as a charlatan. He was not.

Steamboat and submarine

Rumours were one thing, but British naval intelligence had something more concrete to go on when the American engineer and inventor Robert Fulton (1765-1815) arrived in London in 1805. From Fulton they got first-hand information about some French military-engineering projects.

Fulton had been living and working in France since 1797. In 1798 he designed a submarine and, after much lobbying, managed to get state-funding to build

Photos: © WIPL, unless otherwise stated

Above A British cartoon of 1798 depicting the floating island which some claimed was under construction across the Channel and would spearhead Napoleon's invasion of England. It did not exist, and Napoleon went to Egypt instead. But secret weapons and new technology were the stuff of popular wartime nightmares long before the 20th century's industrialised wars.

one. A working vessel was constructed and tested on the Seine in 1800.

Sometimes credited with inventing the first steamboat (he did not), Fulton did launch steamboats, again on the Seine, in 1803 – for the benefit of Napoleon (who was present) and his scientific advisors. The first one sank. A second effort was more successful: a boat some 33 metres long and two-and-a-half wide navigated several hundred metres along the river.

Although this prototype was not developed, neither Fulton nor the British Admiralty could be sure that the effort had been abandoned. If developed, steamboats would change the nature of naval warfare. Tide and wind charts, and strategic considerations based on them, would become useless overnight.

In fact, Napoleon and members of the French scientific institute were not convinced that large-scale seagoing steamships would ever be possible. Napoleon privately dismissed Fulton as a charlatan. He was not.

Another of his ideas – a prototype torpedo – was taken up by his new sponsors in Britain after his arrival there in 1805. The first torpedo was tested with partial success in a raid by the Royal Navy on Boulogne that year.

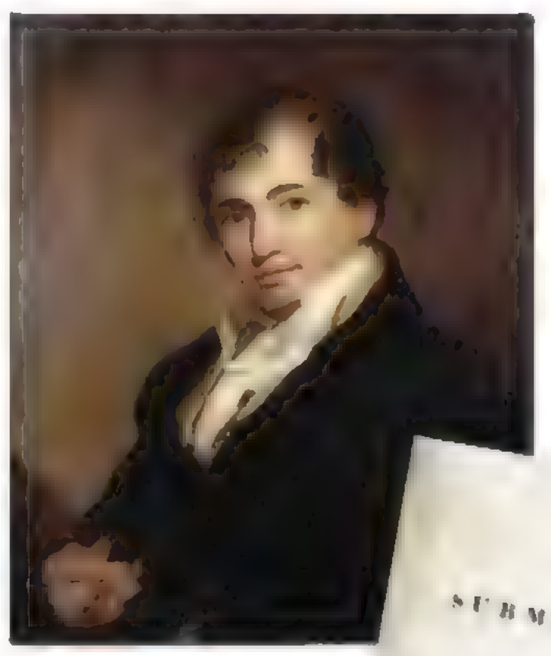
The British Admiralty gradually lost interest on Fulton when the invasion scares reduced later in the decade, after the Battle of Trafalgar, but always in the back of the First Lord's mind was the possibility that underwater weapons and underwater ships, as well as steamships, were being developed just across the English Channel.

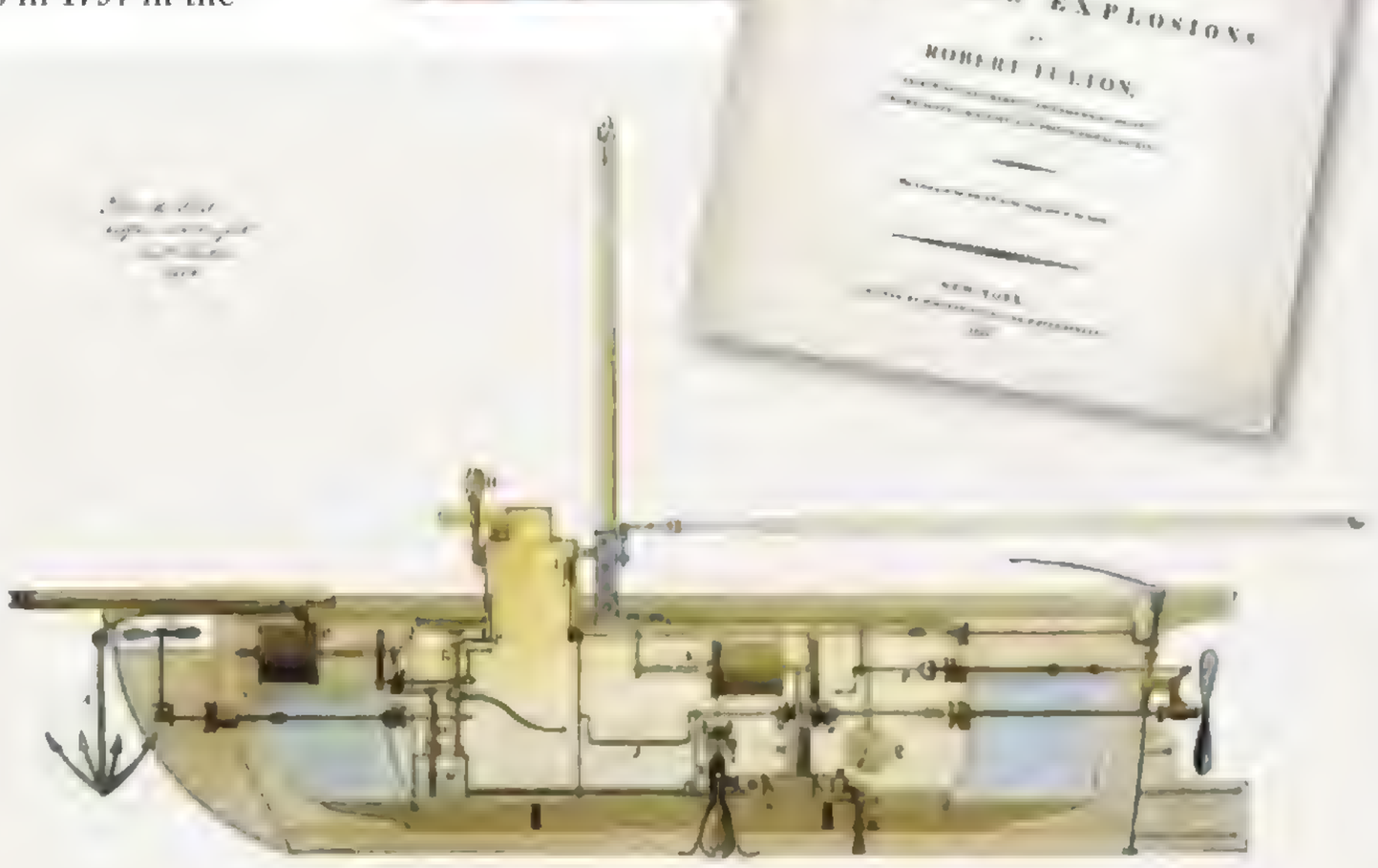
Science and empire

As General Bonaparte, then First Consul, then Emperor of the French, Napoleon had a lifelong interest in science and mathematics. 'The nature of arms has become my profession,' he once said to his scientific advisor and friend Gaspard Monge. 'It was not by choice, and fell to me by force of circumstance. In my youth, I wanted to be an inventor, a Newton.'

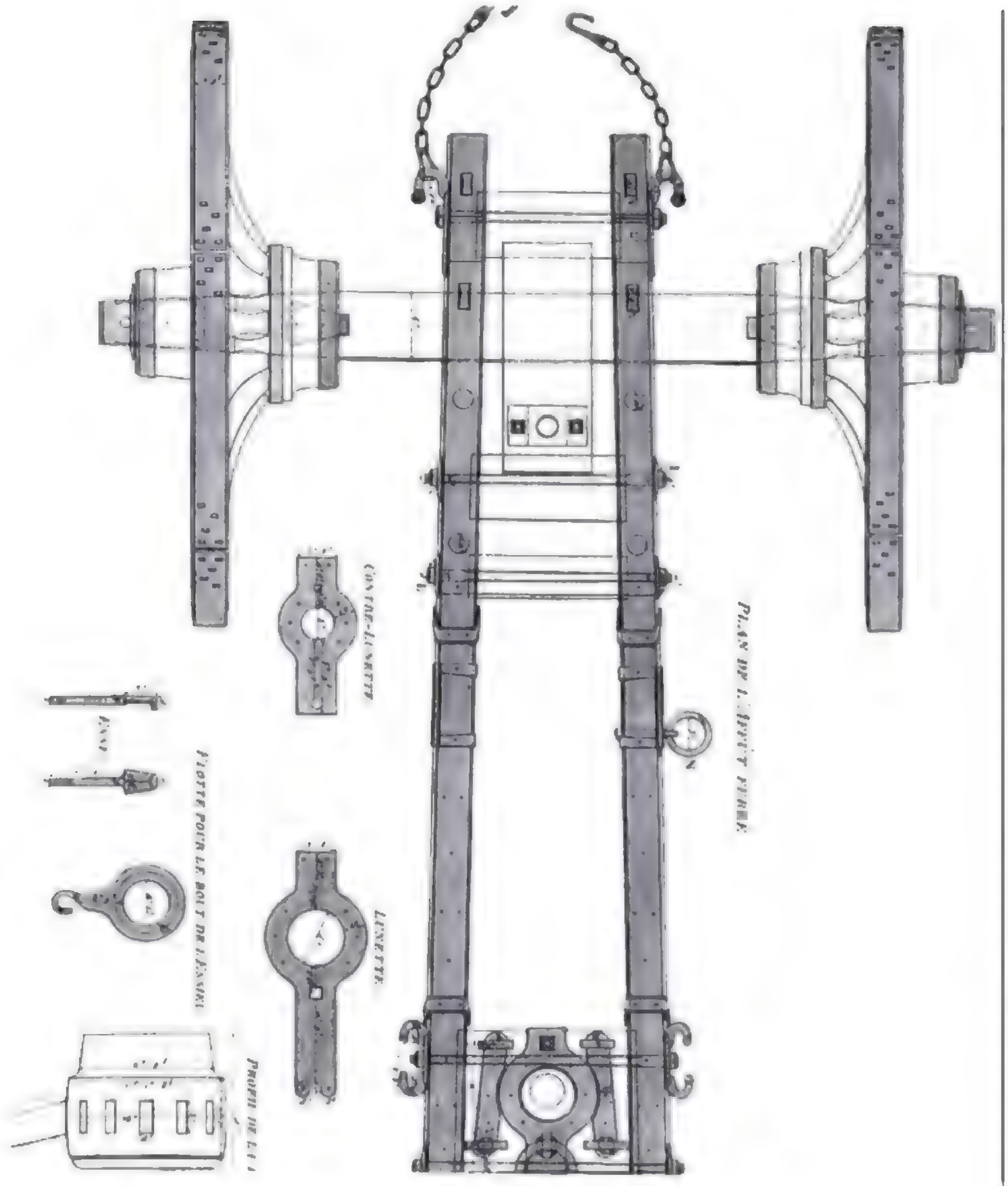
In official correspondence throughout his career, the first title Napoleon accorded himself was not 'First Consul' or 'Emperor', but 'Member of the Institute', a position he was elected to in 1797 in the division of mathematics. As a member, he was entitled to a state salary, and he was listed as the recipient of 3,000 *livres* per annum.

Of course, when he came to power, his technical contributions to the work of the Institute were non-existent, but he was responsible for some organisational and administrative reforms. In Napoleonic fashion, true to nature, he designed special uniforms for the members – full dress for ceremonial occasions and an undress version for ▷





Robert Fulton **[left]** was a brilliant military inventor and engineer who served France, England, and the United States in the great conflicts of his age. He was, for example, the inventor of both the torpedo **[inset]** and the submarine **[below]**.



Above A diagram depicting a 6-pdr cannon from a 1792 edition of an artillery treatise written by the great French ordnance master Jean-Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval. The cannon inherited by the French Revolution were superb, but Napoleon increased their number and massed them in great batteries designed to smash holes in the opposing line before he unleashed his infantry and cavalry.

everyday use. (Whether these uniforms were actually worn is not recorded. Given the individualistic, not to say maverick, nature of most scientists, it seems unlikely.)

But how did Napoleon's interest in mathematics, science, and engineering support his military career?

Science was essential to the success of the Revolution and the Empire. Scientists and engineers were enlisted and trained in their thousands for the corps of engineers, the corps of roads and bridges, the artillery, the cartography section of imperial headquarters, and the military medical establishment.

But in addition to direct service in the military itself, Napoleon needed scientists – his savants – in a wider sense. The artillery, the Emperor's own service, provides a clear example.

Guns and gunpowder

During and immediately following the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the French military establishment noted significant deficiencies in the artillery arm. Guns and gun carriages were of poor quality, trained officers were in short supply, and there was a constant shortage of black powder.

The first deficiency was corrected by Jean-Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval, and Napoleon still used the Gribeauval system substantially unchanged 40 years later, when his artillery was recognised as technically the best in Europe.

The education of artillery officers was also improved. As a technical arm, it was one of the few military functions (engineering being the other) whose officer class was accessible on the basis of merit and not class. Napoleon himself benefited from this, graduating in the artillery school under the pre-revolutionary Ancien Régime.

The third problem – supply of gunpowder – continued to plague the French military until well after Napoleon had become Emperor. An essential ingredient – saltpetre, or potassium nitrate (nitre) using modern nomenclature – could not be imported while the British fleet blockaded French ports.

Saltpetre is a natural substance, and can be produced from human or animal waste. Raw saltpetre could be scraped from the walls of cellars and cesspits. From the early 1790s, before Napoleon's rise to power, the state encouraged the entire population to collect this substance, and instruction pamphlets were published explaining how to refine it.

This endeavour did not, of course, depend on any 'new' science. But the blockade-induced powder shortage set French scientists pondering an alternative to saltpetre.

Explosives

Potassium nitrate is a concentrated source of an essential explosive component – oxygen. Other compounds could, perhaps, be used instead. Sodium nitrate is a good source of oxygen and was subjected to research. Unfortunately for the French chemists who thought to use it in gunpowder, it picks up water from the air, and is therefore unsuitable for storage during a campaign.

Potassium chlorate was another possibility that received attention. Potassium chlorate contains less oxygen than saltpetre, but this oxygen is 'available' to an explosion at lower temperatures. It is therefore more powerful in gunpowder.

It was found to be too powerful, however, and tended to detonate at unexpected and unfortunate moments, with lethal consequences not for France's enemies, but for the artisans who made it and the artillerymen who handled it.

The use of potassium chlorate as a propellant was abandoned after several accidents. The new powder was, however, used as the explosive component in hollow explosive shells. Several thousand were produced – codenamed 'Muriate'

Above Revolutionary and Napoleonic France was turned into a vast arsenal to supply armies of hundreds of thousands of men – a mobilisation of industrial power without historic precedent. Depicted here is a gun-making workshop.

shells – and although they never reached the field artillery, they were stockpiled in the depots of France's coastal artillery. There is no record of their use in action, but, nevertheless, rumours of a very powerful new type of gunpowder spread far and wide.

Incendiaries

Alongside experiments on Muriate munitions, French scientists also explored the possibility of incendiary shells. This was another development which the British Admiralty took a close interest in. Instead of solid cannonballs fired to destroy rigging by physical force, could the French do the same job with fire? Again, significant modifications to naval tactics would result if such a thing were possible.

Unlike Muriate powder, the composition used by the French in these experiments was a secret. Even today we do not know the contents of early 19th-century incendiaries. It is likely, however, that elemental phosphorous was the secret ingredient.

Several incendiary shells were produced and dispatched to coastal batteries. Once again, their effectiveness is not recorded. It is possible they were never used against blockading ships. (In the early days of their development, some of these experimental incendiary shells were designated for the artillery commander at the siege of Toulon – one Napoleon Bonaparte. It was eventually decided not to send them for security reasons. The outcome of the siege was in doubt, and the Paris authorities did not want to risk these secret weapons falling into the hands of the British.)

> A floating island, powered by windmills, capable of carrying 60,000 troops, and armed with 600 guns, was supposedly under construction.

Gun-metal

The vastly expanded artillery arm under Napoleon needed something else in vast quantities – gun bronze. Supplies from England, Sweden, and Russia were cut off by the war, so France needed a local supply.

It was there in abundance, in quantity if not quality. Revolutionary excess had ▷

MORALITY AND NEW WEAPONS

Development of incendiary weapons was held up, initially, by a reluctance of some French political leaders on moral grounds. 'I think that the French Republic will never consent that its fleets should employ means of destruction of that nature, infernal machines, arms suited only to tyrants and it will always be repugnant to a free people to make use of such means to defeat its enemies,' exclaimed Claude Berthollet.

There were also practical reasons against using fire bombs. 'If the navy were to employ such shells, the enemy would have the same thing within a year. Since the English [have] naval superiority this would rebound to the disadvantage of the French': thus reported François Fabre, one of the scientists working on incendiaries at the French Ministry of Marine.

This view was, in fact, irrelevant, since both Britain and Prussia were known to be experimenting with incendiary weapons, and there was a strong rumour that the Russian Navy already had them in 1800.

Moral scruples were swept aside by Napoleon Bonaparte. He did not develop any new terror weapons, not because they were 'immoral', but because, in his day, they had not been brought to a stage of development where they might be of practical use to an army.

led to thousands of churches being destroyed or left derelict. Every church had its complement of bells, and bells were made of bronze. The problem was, however, that bell bronze and gun bronze had a different composition, bell bronze having a much higher tin content. The chemists set to work to remedy this.

By heating molten bronze in air, much of the tin oxidised and could be removed as a slag. Some of the copper oxidised as well, but this waste could be recovered. Reheating the alloy in an inert (oxygen-free) atmosphere resulted in copper oxide being reduced to metal, while the 'spare' oxygen was taken up by any remaining tin. By carefully controlling the heat and the heating conditions (air or no air), the correct composition for gun bronze could be produced, ready for casting into weapons. Napoleon was often short of trained gunners, but never guns.

Air power

The invasion scares of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were exacerbated by another possibility. Instead of Napoleon hammering through the Royal Navy with immense armoured battleships, destroying British ships-of-line with incendiaries or torpedoes, or evading the blockade by sailing underneath the waves, could his armies simply fly over England's defences?

France was at the forefront of balloon technology, and was the first nation to take the military applications of ballooning seriously. The world's first air force was established in 1794. An officer of engineers, Jean-Marie-Joseph Coutelle, commanded the First Company of Aeronauts, and took balloons to the battlefields of the Low Countries and the Rhine.

As aids to battlefield observation, these new contraptions received a mixed response from local commanders. Napoleon was initially an enthusiast, and

> Rumours of a very powerful new type of gunpowder spread far and wide.

LE COMMANDANT COUTELLE
CRÉATION DE L'ÉCOLE
LES AÉROSTIERS DE LA PREMIÈRE RÉPUBLIQUE
COLLECTION A.G.
ROMANET & Cie IMP EDIT PARIS

Above A contemporary illustration showing the French pioneers of military ballooning.

a second company of balloonists was taken on board ships destined for Egypt in 1798.

Again commanded by Coutelle, the company landed safely, but the balloons did not. Lost in a shipwreck, they were replaced by Napoleon's artisans and engineers using local materials, but not very satisfactorily. Released to the skies over Cairo, these makeshift aircraft failed in their primary objective – to impress and overawe the local population. Napoleon never used balloons again, and the world's first air force was disbanded soon after.

The actual practice of using balloons for battlefield observation was less important than the perception, among France's enemies, that such machines were being built. A French balloon had been captured by the Austrians at the Battle of Würzburg in 1795. It is now on display in a Viennese museum.

The British Royal Society in London knew that French scientists had overcome a significant problem preventing full-scale manufacture and deployment of balloons. Balloons needed hydrogen gas – a difficult and expensive material to produce in quantity using the traditional method of reacting sulphuric acid with a metal. Sulphuric acid production, moreover, required large quantities of that very raw material that was in such short supply: saltpetre. But Napoleon's savants had worked out a much easier way of making hydrogen.

They decomposed water vapour (a compound of hydrogen and oxygen) over heated iron. The iron removed the oxygen component, leaving impure hydrogen.

Although impure, the quality of this gas was sufficient for balloons. Producing an armada of troop-carrying balloons was a theoretical possibility. Fortunately for France's enemies across the Channel, it was just that: a theoretical possibility, not yet a practical one.

Signals

One important invention was exploited to the full by Napoleon. Although experimental signalling systems were in place during the latter stages of the Revolution, it was not until Napoleon became First Consul that the full potential of the semaphore telegraph was realised. This communication system was so important to the French generals and diplomats that it is today known as the Napoleonic Semaphore.

After a number of experiments – what kind of signals are easy to see and difficult to misinterpret? – the French engineer Claude Chappe (1763-1805) settled on a system of rods placed at different angles. First used during the Revolutionary Wars, by the end of the First Empire there was a network of 556 stations across France. This visual communication method was so successful that it was still in use in 1852, when electronic communications first became possible.

Napoleon used this new invention to the full, even setting up mobile telegraphy equipment in the field. As the size of French armies and the scale of their operations expanded, so did the use of semaphore. Napoleon's ability to co-ordinate the movement of forces over great distances, wrong-footing his opponents time after time, is legendary. This technical innovation, not taken up by his enemies to anything like the same degree, partly explains this ability.

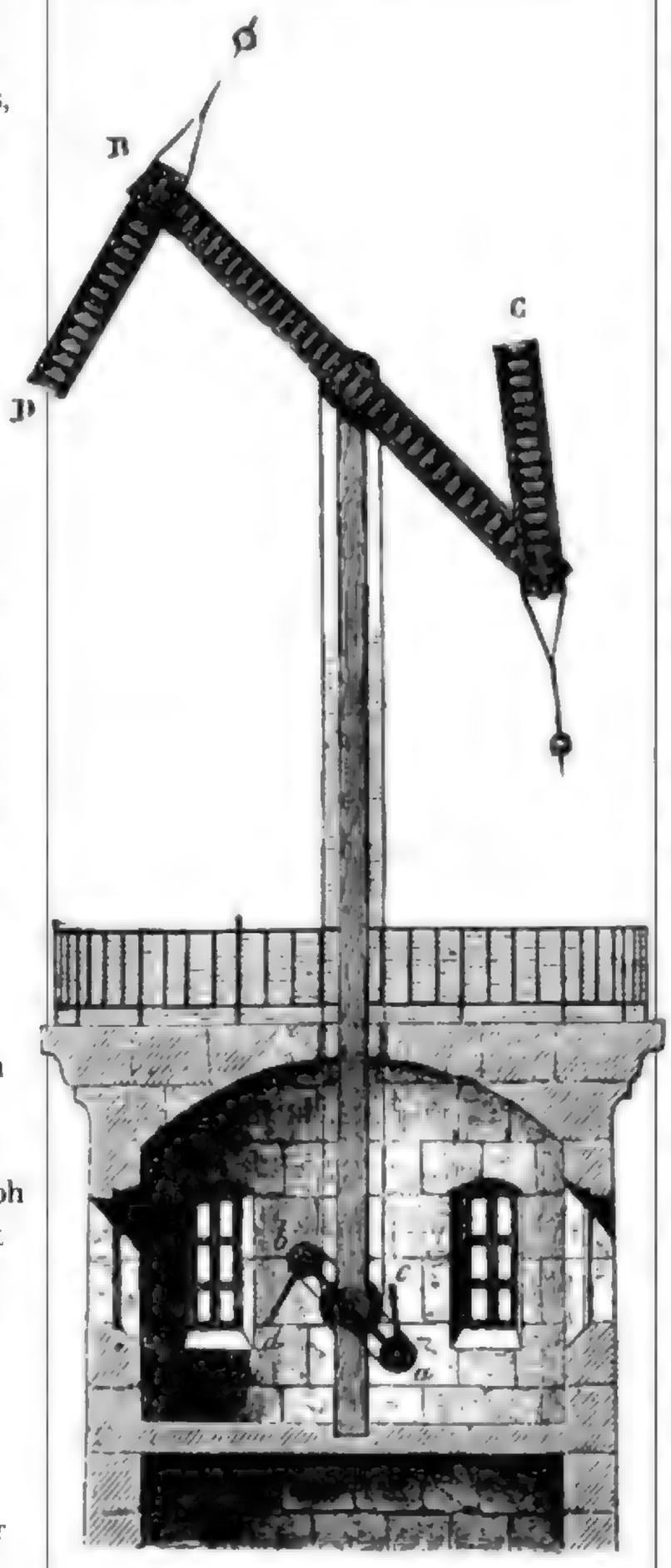
There were drawbacks. A visual system was not private (although codes were in use from 1803), was useless at night, and could not be relied on in poor weather. And yet it was a means of communication not available to Napoleon's technically backward opponents. Wellington had access to a very good Portuguese telegraph system, built on the French model, but not until 1808. Other countries followed suit, but too late to take advantage of semaphore telegraphy in the field until Napoleon was on St Helena.

White or blue?

Science provided more than weapons for Napoleon. The sinews of war extended beyond guns and powder, and there were so many essential ingredients of his war machine that could not be imported because of the blockade. It has been said that Napoleon's experiment with new uniforms – the *habit blanc* – was aborted because either he or his soldiers were upset at the sight of blood on the new white uniforms.

Blood or no, the new all-weather campaigning style of Imperial France meant that white was not a practical colour for uniforms. Soldiers were routinely coated in mud. White, anyway, was associated with the Royalists, whereas blue was the colour of the National Guard created at the beginning of the Revolution in 1789. The problem was getting the dyes.

Although the French chemical industry could produce bleach for wool and linen in large quantity (fine for white uniforms), blue dyes were more difficult to come by. The trend from navy blue to mid-blue in French uniforms between



Above A contemporary illustration of a French semaphore station.

Above Jean-Antoine Chaptal, Napoleon's Minister of the Interior and 'the father of the French chemical industry'.

1794 and 1806 was not by choice. The dyes used were increasingly in short supply and of poor quality.

The embryonic French chemical industry came to the rescue and, based on meticulous chemical research, new dyes were invented and went into production. The problem vanished as these new blues became available from the middle of the decade.

Leather and sugar

Soldiers and horses also needed leather in significant quantities. Leather-making was a long, laborious process, but new methods for making this essential material were developed. The time for curing leather was reduced from months to days using a special chemical process. Napoleon was often short of horses, and even of men, but never of harness or shoe leather.

Sugar is not usually regarded as one of the sinews of war, but it is needed to make wine. The French economy relied heavily on wine production, and without the alcohol tax there would have been no French armies of a size capable of launching an invasion of Russia.

With no sugar cane available from the West Indies, Napoleon's Minister of the Interior, Jean-Antoine Chaptal (1756-1832), sometimes known as 'the father of the French chemical industry', started an indigenous sugar-beet industry, writing a book on the subject for the education of farmers and factory workers.

Invasion scares over, the British population gradually lost interest in Napoleon's supposed secret weapons. No giant steamships appeared in the Thames, no vast flotillas of balloons in the skies over Sussex. And the Royal Navy was fully capable of dealing with a conventional French Navy. Science and technology introduced no new terrors to warfare. ▷

Above French guns in action at the Battle of Lodi in 1796. General Bonaparte can be seen laying the gun. Artillery became far more important during the Napoleonic Wars. The demand for gun-metal and explosives rose accordingly.

And yet the new weapons that had been feared did, indeed, appear as prototypes at the French Arsenal and in shipyards and experimental factories throughout France. What might have happened if Napoleon had lasted a little longer? If he had not been defeated at Leipzig and Waterloo?

The first practical steamships were launched less than ten years after Napoleon's exile on St Helena. The problem of sodium nitrate collecting water from the atmosphere was solved by the middle of the century. Would Napoleon's favourite chemist, Claude Berthollet, have made this discovery under Napoleon, given enough time?

Incendiary shells were known to be under development in France; with enough time and financial investment, could Napoleon's scientists have developed these weapons to the point where the Royal Navy's advantage in ships and seamanship would have been neutralised?

Rockets and torpedoes were developed as weapons during Napoleon's wars. What if he had taken these weapons seriously? With the Royal Navy out of the way, the history of Britain might well have been very different indeed.

Further information

Source material is sparse in English, but abundant in French. The best work in English, C C Gillispie's *Science and Polity in France – the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Years* (2004), is technical and academic, but nevertheless expertly researched and written.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Allan Ashworth was a retired consultant in science and engineering. He was researching French scientific achievements during the First Empire (1804-1815) and had just submitted this article to *Military History Monthly* when he passed away. We are pleased to publish the article in his memory with the kind permission of his widow.

THE INSTITUTE AT CAIRO

Napoleon saw himself as a second Alexander the Great. His expedition to the east, like Alexander's, would be more than a straightforward military conquest. It was also to be a cultural expedition and an exploration of the unknown.

Embarked with the troops was a Commission of Science and Art, with a complement of 151 savants. The more senior Commission members were nominated to the newly formed Scientific Institute of Cairo. Napoleon wrote to his new Institute frequently, posing a number of problems of importance to the military arm of the expedition.

'How can we manufacture gunpowder locally?' was one. 'Please design a furnace to heat cannon balls to use against enemy fleets' was another. More questions were concerned with feeding his army. Should windmills or watermills be used for grinding corn? What are the local means of making beer, and could this be used as a substitute for wine in the men's rations? How can we purify Nile water to make it fit to drink?

Aside from these matters of detail, there was one overriding mission for the civilian scientists. Napoleon wanted Egypt to be a self-sustaining French colony, without needing to depend on the motherland. The Commission was set the task of organising Egyptian agriculture and industry so that the new sultan could maintain his army there indefinitely, supported and supplied entirely through Egyptian produce and Egyptian taxes. Such an army, enhanced by locally raised auxiliaries, would one day march across Asia to strike at England by invading India.

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Left The face of Jack Hawkins looks out from the 1953 poster for *The Cruel Sea*.

THE CRUEL SEA

Taylor Downing on the WWII naval epic based closely on Nicholas Monsarrat's famous novel.

In 1951 Nicholas Monsarrat published his fourth book on the naval war: *The Cruel Sea*. Monsarrat described it as the story 'of one ocean, two ships, and about one hundred and fifty men.' In a gritty, realistic style, the book conveys the joys and the tragedies, the cruelty and the horror of the Battle of Atlantic.

It focuses on the relationship between Captain George Ericson and a reserve officer who becomes his Number One, Keith Lockhart. It tells the story of HMS *Compass Rose*, a corvette, and HMS *Saltash*, a frigate, and the crews who sailed them from 1939 to 1945. The book captures the rituals of life at sea, and goes into the heart of the action. At times the description of sailing through rough seas is strong enough to make the reader almost feel seasick.

The Cruel Sea is a novel, but it is based very much on Monsarrat's own wartime experiences. He had served on corvettes and on a frigate in the Atlantic for four years, rising through the ranks. He had sailed with crews whose moving human stories are reflected in the characters in *The Cruel Sea*. Monsarrat had been a journalist before the war and became a Royal Naval Reserve Officer because of his interest in sailing.

Art reflecting reality

The central character, Lockhart, had a similar background and was clearly based on the author. And although the book is a work of fiction, it comes very near to non-fiction in long sequences that explain the challenges and the terrors of the Battle of the Atlantic. Rising above much wartime fiction, the book's in-your-face realism still makes it one of the great classics of naval warfare today. The book became an instant best-seller, and over the years has sold more than a million copies.

A year after its release, Sir Michael Balcon, the legendary head of Ealing Studios, acquired the film rights to the book. During the war, Balcon had produced some memorable films about the conflict, most notably *Went the Day Well?* (directed by Alberto Cavalcanti, 1943) and *San Demeterio, London* (directed by Charles Frend, 1943). Post-war, Balcon did not produce many war films, although he had a great interest in heroes and in close-knit male communities. Kenneth Tynan, the critic, later rather cruelly said of Balcon that 'he has never made a film which paid any real attention to sex. His favourite productions... deal exclusively with men at work, men engrossed in a crisis, men who communicate with their women mainly by post-card. A wry smile, a pat on the head, and off into the unknown.'

Monsarrat's book clearly attracted Balcon as he wanted to pay tribute to the men who had kept the sea lanes open and ensured Britain's survival during the war years. There was, however, some pretty explicit sexual content in the book – this did not make it into the film.

Balcon took on Eric Ambler as screenwriter and he adapted Monsarrat's book but kept close to the original. Charles Frend directed. He had made a run of highly successful wartime films that could loosely be termed as propaganda, among them *The Foreman went to France* (1943) and *San Demetrio, London* (1943). Balcon put together a stellar cast that would ensure the film attracted big audiences. Jack Hawkins played Captain Ericson – a superb performance that transformed

EALING STUDIOS

By the early 1950s, the Ealing Studios were most famous for such comedies as *Whisky Galore* (1949) and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), and for a run of gritty thrillers like *The Blue Lamp* (1950). Michael Balcon was head of the studio from 1939 to 1959 and believed very much in creating a team of writers, directors, and actors who provided a sort of film studio repertory working together on film after film. The films produced at Ealing touched a popular nerve and caught the spirit of the times, most especially the quiet, understated heroism of the war years and the modest optimism of the post-war era. In 1955, when Ealing Studios was sold, Balcon put up a plaque that read 'Here during a quarter of a century many films were made projecting Britain and the British character.' It remains a fitting epitaph.

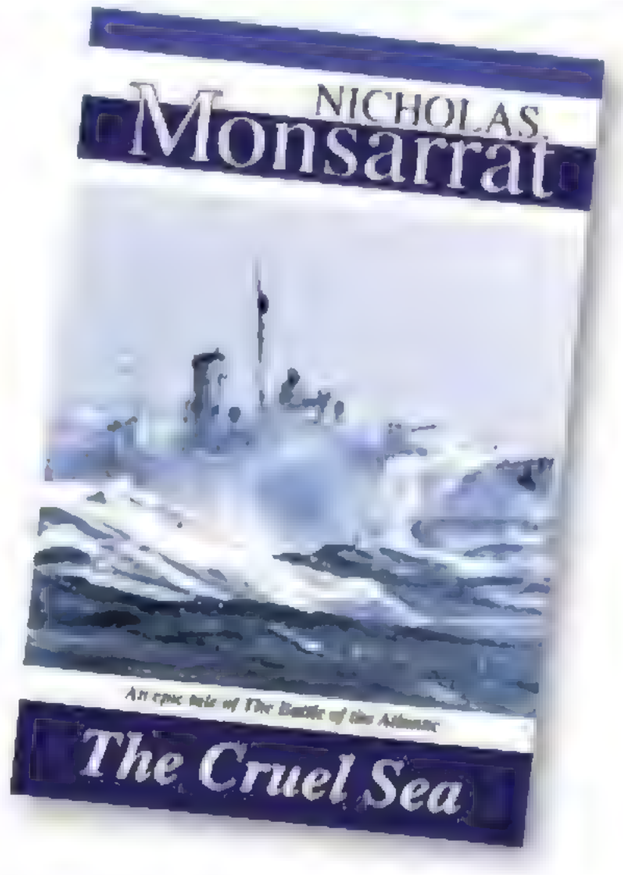
his career. The young Donald Sinden played Lockhart. And both Denholm Elliott and Virginia McKenna emerged as stars in the film.

The *Compass Rose*

The film begins with the fitting out of HMS *Compass Rose*, a small corvette. After sea trials, the ship begins its escort duties in the vast, turbulent seas of the Atlantic. Initially, the U-boats cannot penetrate as far as the central Atlantic, and the raging sea is the worst enemy faced by the naval escort. But after the fall of France, the U-boats can use French ports, which means they are able to range across the whole ocean. The violent seas then become the friend of the convoys and their escorts, as no submarine could attack during the wild storms.

For the first mission, a lazy, abusive, bullying First Lieutenant dominates the officers' Ward Room, impressively played by Stanley Baker. But he finds the going too rough and drops out, apparently with a duodenal ulcer, one of the few ailments the Admiralty would accept as a reason for not sending a man to sea. Lockhart is promoted to Number One and the central relationship in the film begins to play out between Lockhart and Captain Ericson.

Throughout the film, authentic archive footage of ships going down and of men being rescued in various states of terrible distress is intercut with the staged scenes. A genuine Flower-class corvette was found in Malta, awaiting the breaker's yard, and this ship, HMS *Coreopsis*, was used in the scenes filmed at sea. The naval filming was done out of Plymouth and Donald Sinden later recalled that in the first few days of filming the sea was too calm, so they sailed to an area near Portland Bill where several tides met at a single point – and the director got the scenes he needed.



Left The film is based on a novel by Nicholas Monsarrat. Much of the material in the book is drawn from Monsarrat's own war-time experiences.

Gibraltar Run

A core sequence in the film is the 'Gibraltar run' in the summer of 1941. *Compass Rose* accompanies a convoy to the Mediterranean and they are spotted by a German reconnaissance aircraft, over the Bay of Biscay, that reports on ▷

ASDIC

In *The Cruel Sea*, the 'ping... ping' sound of ASDIC provides a constant and dramatic backdrop to the scenes on board the *Compass Rose* and *Saltash Castle*. ASDIC had been developed by the Royal Navy in the 1920s. A transmitter sent out sound pulses and a receiver picked up their echoes that bounced back after hitting an object below the sea. In 1939 it was the navy's sole device available for detecting submarines. In the early part of the war its range was limited and it could be disrupted by water turbulence generated by ships' wakes or the use of depth charges. But continual improvements to the technology made it more reliable. In *The Cruel Sea* the veteran ASDIC operators are shown to be highly effective in using ASDIC to track down the precise location and distance of objects under the sea and to direct the vessel to exactly the right spot to fire off its depth charges.

Below Jack Hawkins as Captain Ericson, a well-respected commander under whose watch countless merchant vessels and their crews are lost.

the progress of the convoy. Before long, a pack of U-boats attack the convoy and sink more than half of its ships. *Compass Rose* picks up as many survivors as it can, filling its decks with wounded and dying sailors. Each rescue puts the corvette itself in great danger, as pausing to pick up men from the sea makes it an easy target.

In one central and harrowing scene, Lockhart thinks he has an ASDIC contact with a U-boat just near the place where a cargo-ship has gone down. Ericson spots desperate survivors waving for help in the sea above the location of the U-boat.

He has to decide whether to go ahead and launch his depth charges, which will result in certain death for the survivors. In the book, Monsarrat is precise about the horrible deaths these men will suffer as their bodies are literally split from end to end or blown into dozens of pieces. In the film, the focus is on Jack Hawkins as the captain who has to decide whether to attack or not. After being assured that this is 'the firmest contact we have ever had' he launches his depth charges.

All we see is the reaction of the men on *Compass Rose* as they watch in horror while the bodies of the hopeless survivors are ripped apart by the explosions. The book makes it clear that the ASDIC signal was not a U-boat but the cargo-ship slowly sinking. The film leaves it unclear except that no U-boat is sunk. One of the sailors on the *Compass Rose* shouts out 'Bloody murderer' at the captain. When they finally get to Gibraltar, Lockhart blames himself for murdering the men. Ericson, with tears in his eyes, replies 'No one murdered them. It's the war, the whole bloody war. We've got to do these things and say our prayers at the end.'

But Ericson then collapses in inconsolable grief and gets terribly drunk. It was clearly an issue for the film-makers as to how much emotion should be displayed in these scenes. Open emotion was not something Ealing specialised in. In his autobiography, Jack Hawkins says that the scene was played in three different ways on successive days to try to get the level of emotion right. The final scene is certainly intense and dramatic, and forcefully conveys the cruel responsibilities of command.

Above The real HMS *Saltash*, on which the fictitious vessel in *The Cruel Sea* was based.

On the way back from Gibraltar, escorting another convoy, the *Compass Rose* suffers a technical breakdown. The engineering chief takes about 20 hours to fix the fault as the ship lies motionless on the ocean, a sitting duck for any U-boat in the vicinity. The tension on board is intense. When they finally catch up with the convoy, they spot a U-boat waiting to attack. The *Compass Rose* goes in for the kill and sinks the U-boat. After so much loss, there is at last something to celebrate. In the book, the arrogant young U-boat captain is rescued and brought aboard, and Ericson is so outraged by his behaviour he considers shooting him in cold blood there and then. This sequence does not appear in the film.

Love stories

There are three male–female relationships in the film. A stoker meets the sister of one of his mates, Gladys, on home leave in Liverpool. Gladys is played by the always down-to-earth Megs Jenkins. A relationship quietly builds up between them, and we are later told they have become engaged. Then, on arriving back at Liverpool after a tough mission, the men find the street where Gladys lives has been bombed and she has been killed. In typical Ealing style, the men display no grief but carry on with what has to be done. The story is a reminder that it is not just servicemen who are the victims of this war, but that civilians are in the front line too.

THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

The Battle of the Atlantic was one of the most crucial for the Allies in the whole war (see *MHM* 37). Churchill later wrote, 'The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril. I was even more anxious about this battle than I had been about the glorious air fight called the Battle of Britain.' In 1939 Britain needed to import 55 million tons of raw materials by sea annually just to survive. This increased during the war years, as vast numbers of vehicles, guns, tanks, aircraft, and ammunition were brought in from the US, along with other matériel. The Germans began the war with only 27 ocean-going U-boats under the command of Admiral Karl Dönitz. But this number rapidly increased. In the last six months of 1940, U-boats sank 471 ships in the Atlantic, more than two million tons of shipping. So, in February 1941, Churchill created a new Western Approaches command centre in Liverpool under Admiral Sir Percy Noble, from where the whole Atlantic campaign was led. Initially, the code-breakers at Bletchley Park were able to track the movement of the U-boats and provide some early warning to the ships at sea. But when the German navy in February 1942 created a new and more advanced configuration of its Enigma called 'Shark' everything went blank. During the second half of 1942 the U-boats sank around 500 ships in the Atlantic, three million tons of shipping. The worst single month came in March 1943, when 600,000 tons of shipping was lost. By then every possible application of science had been used to tackle the U-boat menace. New micro-wave radar systems could pick up a conning-tower on the surface of the sea one hundred miles away. Long-range aircraft began to patrol the vast reaches of the ocean. The Leigh Light enabled aircraft to spot and attack U-boats at night. Escort vessels improved in both speed and firepower. And, finally, with the help of some captured code-books, the code-breakers at Bletchley managed to crack Shark. Eventually, in May 1943, the tide turned: 43 U-boats were sunk in that month alone. The hunters had become the hunted, and Dönitz at last admitted defeat. The Wolf Packs were withdrawn from the Atlantic.

In another sequence, we see a young officer, John Morell (played by Denholm Elliott), and his wife, a young actress (played by Moira Lister), who is obviously two-timing her husband. At the end of his leave, as Morell prepares to return to the rigours of convoy escort duty, his wife announces she cannot see him off as she has a party to attend with a famous producer.

The principal love interest in the film is that between the central character, Lockhart, and a glamorous young WRNS officer who works in the Western Approaches headquarters, Second Officer Julie Hallam, dazzlingly played by Virginia McKenna. Theirs is a complex affair, as Lockhart is reluctant to commit to a relationship in such uncertain and troubled times. But after several meetings, their relationship advances, and in the book clearly becomes sexual. In the film this is far less evident. The relationship blossoms, giving Lockhart a reason for surviving and a dream of post-war happiness. In the book, Hallam is killed on duty. In the film she survives, and one assumes she and Lockhart live happily ever after.

One of the most dramatic scenes features the sudden sinking of *Compass Rose* by a U-boat that strikes out of the blue at night. Within minutes, the ship starts to sink. Screams come up the pipe to the bridge from the men trapped below decks. The lifeboats cannot be freed, and the survivors gather around two rafts. At dawn, the two rafts join up, Ericson on one and Lockhart another. The survivors are picked up by one of the escorts that comes back to look for them.

Ericson is then given command of a new, fast frigate, and Lockhart elects to stay with him. They form a formidable team, and take part in escorting an Arctic convoy to Russia, as well as more Atlantic convoys. But Ericson still has to struggle with the responsibilities of leadership. In one intense sequence, the *Saltash Castle* picks up the sonar of a U-boat and goes in to attack. Lockhart is convinced when oil comes to the surface that they have sunk the U-boat. Ericson believes this to be a deception, and insists on maintaining the pursuit throughout the day and the following night. The men on the bridge and below decks are utterly exhausted by the ordeal, but Ericson's hunch is right, and eventually they succeed in sinking the U-boat.

The Cruel Sea was an enormous success on its release in 1953, and it proved to be the most successful film at the box office that year. It is a powerful tribute to the men who fought the Battle of the Atlantic, one of the most crucial battles of the war. But it is not a simple celebration of a vital victory. There are no mock-heroics in the film. Frend concentrates on showing the drama and the tension on men's faces. Alongside the actors, real sailors were used, and their expressive faces provide the backdrop of the whole film.

As well as tragedy, *The Cruel Sea* explores the futility of the war at sea. The film spans the entire war, from 1939 to 1945. Ericson is a successful commander who is well respected for his triumphs. But the film shows countless merchant vessels and their crews being lost. At the end Ericson, for all his success, sums it up when he says, 'We only sank two U-boats in five years.' This was a battle well stacked in favour of the U-boats and their daring commanders. It was a battle that had to be won. *The Cruel Sea* brilliantly captures the spirit of the men who won it.

Above The convoy being escorted by *Compass Rose* under comes under attack in the Mediterranean.

Right Lockhart falls for a beautiful young WRNS officer (played by Virginia McKenna) who works in the Western Approaches headquarters, providing the film's principal love story.

THE CRUEL SEA

An Ealing Studios production, based on the book by Nicholas Monsarrat. Directed by Charles Frend, produced by Leslie Norman and Michael Balcon. Starring Jack Hawkins, Donald Sinden, Denholm Elliott, Stanley Baker, and Virginia McKenna. A StudioCanal Vintage Classics DVD.

OPERATION HUSKY

70
YEARS
on from the
Allied
INVASION
of Sicily

Dave
SLOGGETT

looks at its
SIGNIFICANCE
&
asks if it was a
TURNING POINT
in the war

A turning-point is a moment in time when a situation that was heading in one direction suddenly does a volte face and heads in another. Historians, though, are often unable to see their subject in such simple terms. While there are numerous examples where a single event changes history, such as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, there are also examples of turning-points that develop at a slower pace – almost unseen until hindsight offers a chance to look back into what were, at the time, opaque events.

This is the case with the Second World War. At the mid-point of the war its final outcome was not assured. The Russian resistance in Stalingrad was desperate, the Battle of the Atlantic had yet to turn decisively in favour of the Allies, and the news from the Pacific theatre was patchy.

The two bright spots had been El Alamein and Operation Torch. The Eighth Army's march westwards from Egypt and the American landings in Morocco and Algeria had culminated in the capture of over 250,000 Germans in the Tunisia pocket. The question then was: what next?

Malta: strategic lynch-pin

Key to that decision was going to be a largely forgotten little island in the Mediterranean Sea called Malta. In the middle of 1942 it had been on its knees, days away from surrender. A year later it was to provide the location where the Allies would plan their next major venture: one that would, as things turned out, be the beginning of the long road to victory over Nazi Germany.

The survival of Malta had not just been a tactical success; it had huge strategic implications. It was, quite literally, a turning-point in the war.

The fact that Malta had survived the fury of the Nazi war-machine gave Allied planners some crucial flexibility. As the men of XX Section started their planning of the D-Day deception operation that was to become known as 'Fortitude', the survival of Malta meant that the Mediterranean theatre was one where immediate progress could be made. The big questions were: when, how, and where?

Arriving in Casablanca after an arduous journey from Washington, via Miami, then the Caribbean, then Brazil, and from there across the Atlantic to British Gambia, before making the final hop up the African coast, President Roosevelt knew something had to be done, and quickly.

Casablanca: the Big Two

Stalin was unable to attend the conference: the Battle of Stalingrad was at a crucial stage. Roosevelt and Churchill decided to go ahead with the meeting, and they assembled with their key military leaders to debate what to do next. Churchill was of the same mind as Roosevelt. Something had to be done to take the pressure off the Russians. But they differed on where to strike.

General Marshall favoured a landing directly into northern Europe. Churchill was not convinced. His argument was that more time was needed to plan the invasion of Europe. History may imply that Churchill's unusual circumspection was justified. The consequences of his previous willingness to take risks – in the Norway operation in 1940, for example, or the invasion of Greece in 1941 – may have instilled in him a greater sense of caution.

In the course of the debate, eyes turned to the Mediterranean theatre. After all, this was where the Allies had been successful to date. With Malta now secure, the island might act as a platform for the next step. Why not continue? ▷

Continued on page 41

Above The cover of a Vichy French magazine passes satirical comment on Operation Torch, portraying the Americans as imperialists and warmongers who are making a grab for French colonies in North Africa. The reference to Lafayette is ironic: he was a French general who campaigned alongside the Americans during the Revolutionary War of 1775-1783. What is certainly true is that the US intervention transformed the war in the Mediterranean.

Below The Casablanca Conference. US flag-bearers stand to attention with the Stars and Stripes outside President Roosevelt's villa as the Big Two meet on the lawn.

OPERATION PEDESTAL

The Allied victory in Sicily had its genesis in Malta. First and foremost the island had to survive the onslaught meted out on a daily basis by Axis bombers targeting the capital, Valetta. During those terrible months, the German and Italian air-forces dropped more bombs per square metre onto the city than any other place has experienced on earth. This was a naked attempt to intimidate the population.

As with London, Hamburg, and Dresden, however, the bombers failed to break civilian morale. But in the case of Malta it was a very close thing. Nearly one year before Operation Husky was launched, the island was within days of running out of food. Rations were meagre. For many Maltese in 1942, the staple diet consisted of soup and bread. There was no tea, butter, meat, rice, soap, or oil.

Malta's lowest ebb came in August 1942. The governor, Lord Gort, kept a daily running diary of how bad the situation was, and at this point he believed the island had ten days left before he had to surrender. Malta's dire predicament was fully appreciated in London. Churchill had long overcome his initial prevarication over the strategic importance of the island. Something had to be done to get relief supplies through. That something was Operation Pedestal.

Relief convoy

It was to produce one of the iconic images of the Second World War: the tanker *Ohio* being shepherded into Grand Harbour by three tugs, with what seemed like the entire population of the island cheering from the ramparts of Valetta's 15th-century fortifications, built by the Knights Grand Cross as a defence against the Moors.

Throughout the journey from Gibraltar, *Ohio* had been the target of deliberate attacks. It had survived them all, though heavily damaged. Its vital fuel supplies could then be unloaded.

Before Operation Pedestal, some supplies had been getting through to the island using submarines equipped to carry fuel for the RAF. The squadrons stationed on the island were engaged in a furious struggle for control of the skies above.

One fast minelayer called *Welshman* was also making runs from Gibraltar to Valetta bringing in small quantities of vital supplies. But to feed the population required something much larger.

Planning for the operation had started a few weeks earlier in July 1942. Such was the commitment of the Royal Navy to the relief of the island that the escorts comprised two battleships (HMS *Nelson* and HMS *Rodney*), three aircraft carriers (HMS *Eagle*, HMS *Victorious*, and HMS *Indomitable*), an escort carrier (HMS *Furious*), seven cruisers, and 20 destroyers. These provided the guard for the 14 merchantmen carrying the vital relief supplies.

With such a large force being assembled, it was inevitable that the Axis powers would be aware of it, and of its purpose. Determined to overwhelm Malta and change the whole military balance in the Mediterranean, specialised maritime bombing squadrons were deployed into Sicily.

Air and submarine attack

After leaving Gibraltar, the convoy was the subject of a series of attacks by submarines, E boats, and aircraft along its dangerous route to Valetta. Of the 14 merchantmen that set out, only five arrived. All of them had experienced some form of damage.

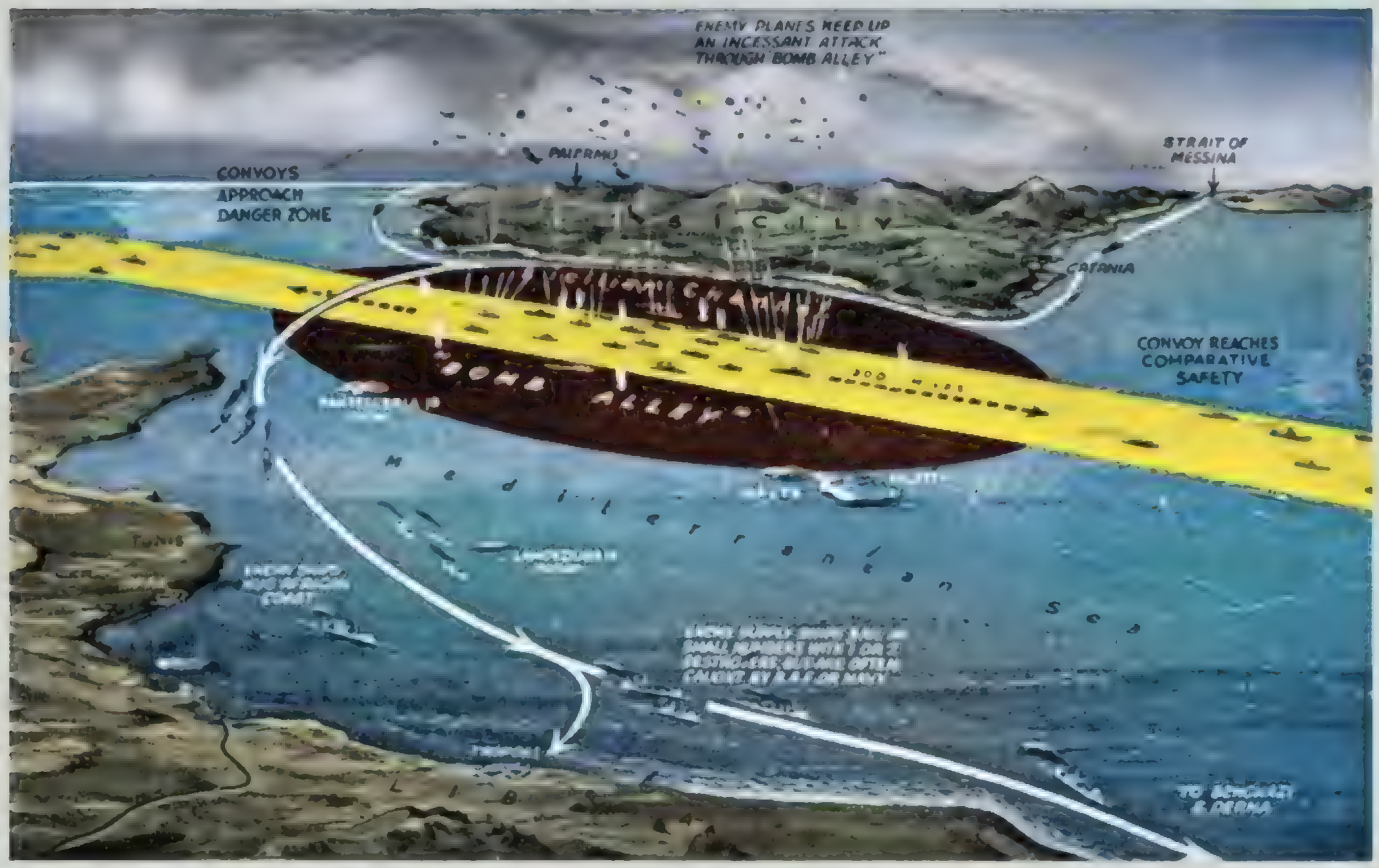
The Royal Navy lost the aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle* to a submarine attack (though the great majority of its crew were saved). The cruisers HMS *Manchester* and HMS *Cairo* were also sunk, alongside the destroyer HMS *Foresight*. The aircraft carrier HMS *Indomitable*, the cruisers HMS *Kenya* and HMS *Nigeria*, and the destroyer HMS *Ithuriel* were also damaged. In total, just over 400 lives had been lost.

Malta, however, survived. Within days of the arrival of the remnants of the convoy, the Rome correspondent of the *Tribune de Genève* noted that 'no further attempts to neutralise Malta will be made for the present'. It would seem that the Axis powers had judged that the supplies that had got through would sustain Malta for 'some time to come'.

The survival of Malta gave the Allies two important strategic advantages. The first was that it enabled attacks to continue on the convoys crossing the Mediterranean Sea to resupply the Afrika Korps. In time that was to have a huge impact on Rommel's ability to sustain his operations in North Africa.

The second and perhaps equally important advantage was that Malta could now be used as a planning hub and logistical centre for Operation Husky. Stalin was about to get his Second Front in Europe.

Below A contemporary map-diagram that illustrates the location and character of 'Bomb Alley' – the stretch of the convoy run to Malta that passed through the narrow gap between Axis-controlled Sicily and Tunisia.



Continued from page 39

Perhaps the most vexing question was where? All of the obvious options had their positive and negative points.

Another attack into Greece could eventually have threatened the vital Romanian oil-fields. A direct assault on Italy was risky, but it might quickly bring down the Fascist government. Many Italians had already decided their alliance with Nazi Germany was going to end badly. Why not go for the jugular and see what happened? Other options were also on the table. One of these involved an invasion of Sicily.

Sicily: navel of the Med

After the conference it was agreed that Sicily should be the next target. While it would not quite give Stalin what he wanted, it would be a start. And it was just feasible. Having driven the Germans out of North Africa, the Allies had equipment and battle-ready troops to hand.

The next question was how to do it? A joint UK-US planning team was formed in Algeria under the leadership of British Major-General Charles Gairdner. Over a period of weeks it developed a plan to land Allied forces at several locations along the Sicilian coast. The northern port of Palermo was considered an important prize. Once secure, the Allied build-up of equipment could gather pace.

El Alamein defined Montgomery. Sicily showed Patton's strengths as an army commander.

Above The 1943 invasion of Sicily, showing the respective British and American landings. The campaign was notable for the effective defensive tactics and fighting withdrawal by German General Hube on the east-coast route, which held up Montgomery just long enough to enable Patton, facing weaker (or non-existent) Italian resistance, to beat him to Messina.

The initial plan quickly ran into trouble, however. What followed over the coming months was a series of fractious and inconclusive meetings between the principals involved in the operation.

From the outset, General Bernard Montgomery was distrustful of the whole scheme. Whereas the first plan paid attention to the need to neutralise the German airfields in Sicily and capture key ports to enable a rapid build-up of equipment and supplies, Montgomery thought it ill-considered and based on muddled thinking. He manoeuvred to have Gairdner replaced.

Montgomery favoured a very different approach. This was to concentrate force in south-eastern Sicily, in striking distance of the strategically important city of Messina.

Partly through guile, and also by subverting the line of command, Montgomery managed to get his way.

By introducing changes to the plan, the Eighth Army commander threatened the political timetable Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed at Casablanca. Political promises had been made to Stalin and they had to be kept. By pushing a new version of the plan, Monty was risking all. There was more than one occasion when his peers suspected he was in danger of dismissal. The victor of El Alamein, of course, harboured no such fears.

Monty and Patton

General Patton was appointed to command the American contribution to what became known as Operation Husky. Patton, for all his directness, sat on the fringes of some of the planning meetings bemused by Montgomery's approach. In his diary, Patton noted that he felt the landings were being planned to ensure another major victory for the British. It was clearly something that irked him deeply. He thought the British undervalued the fighting abilities of the Americans. ▷

Continued on page 44

ESCAPE FROM MESSINA

Dunkirk is one of the most iconic events in the Second World War to British eyes. To spirit 300,000 men across the English Channel after a forlorn attempt to save France is undoubtedly one of the great military achievements of the war.

As the Allied liberation of Sicily neared its goal, however, another – equally daring, equally successful, but relatively unknown – evacuation took place. This saw the German Army under General Hube moved from Messina across the straits onto the mainland of Italy. While its scale was very small compared to the operation to extract the British Army from the beaches of Dunkirk, the evacuation stands out as a classic piece of military planning.

Its impact was huge. It condemned the Allies to a long and costly battle for Italy, fighting many of the units that might have been captured in Sicily. In this respect, Operation Husky was an abject failure.

Once the Allies had gained a foothold on Sicily, General Hube realised that he was going to have to grind their advance to a halt or

Left An Axis propaganda poster aimed at Allied troops. The escape of Hube's army from Sicily, the reinforcements sent by Hitler after the fall of Mussolini, and the natural defensibility of the Italian terrain all combined to produce exactly the snail's pace progress depicted.

conduct an organised fighting retreat. Initially he kept his options open, unsure whether the Allies would be able to mass the forces required to overcome well-dug-in defenders.

General Hube and his planning team used the rugged landscape of Sicily to great advantage. Narrow gorges and single roads through mountainous regions provided ideal terrain to fight infantry. Allied air superiority over the battlefield was cancelled out by defensive positions that were deep, camouflaged, and manned by dedicated and tough German troops.

Hube's fighting retreat

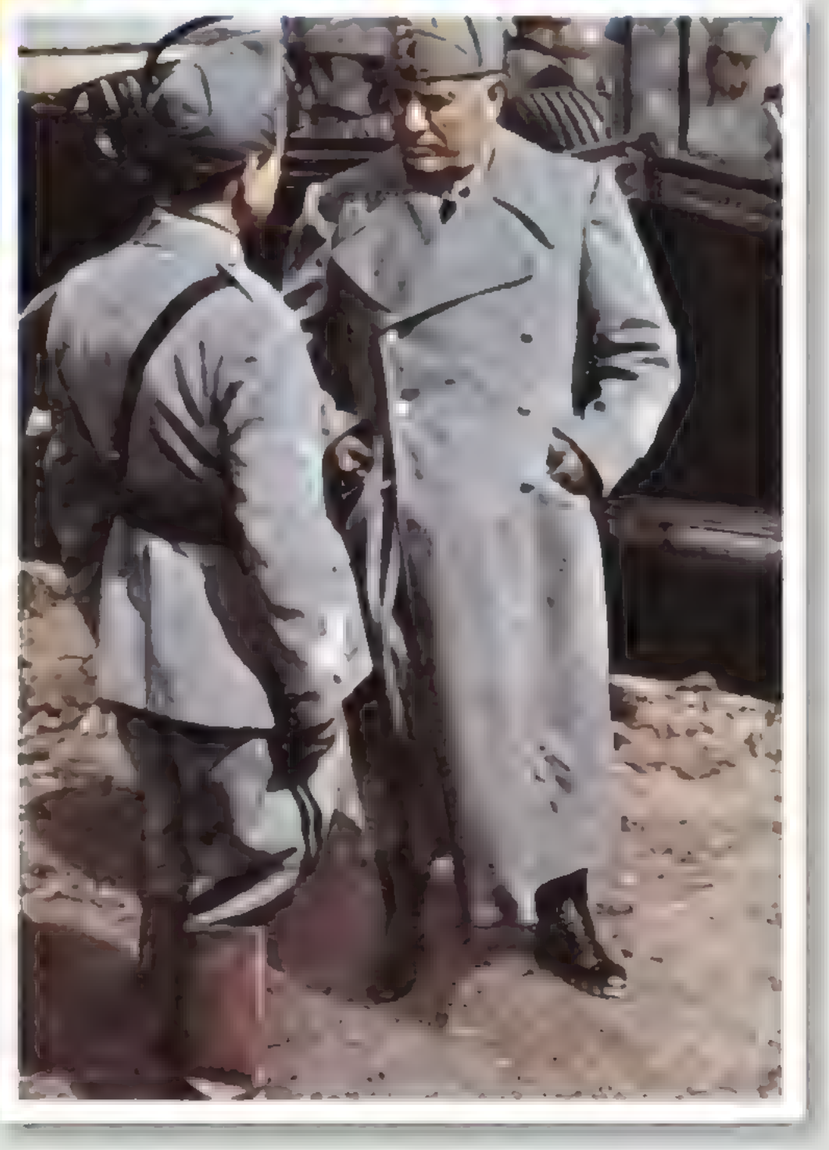
Hube's plan was simple: to create a series of defensive lines that the Allies had to break through in a series of costly set-piece battles. The terrain afforded enemy commanders little room for outflanking manoeuvres. Each position had to be taken using combined arms and tactical air-power. Along the coast the Royal Navy also provided naval gunfire support. This form of warfare was to presage what was to come in Italy.

As the Allies used their numerical advantage to put pressure on the defensive line, Hube would wait until the last possible moment and then evacuate to the next defensive position. Each time, the length of the next defensive line was reduced, and men and machinery vital to the long-term war effort were evacuated over the Straits of Messina to Italian ports such as Cannitello, Pezzo, Catona, and Gallico.

As they retreated, German engineers laid traps and blew up vital communications links to further hamper Allied progress. At times the high-tempo operation demanded by Allied commanders was simply not possible.

The officer in charge of the evacuation was Oberst Ernst-Günther Baade. General Hube gave him total control over the logistics of the evacuation. He had charge of the air and sea defences for Messina. He set up seven evacuation routes from fishing villages around the town.

On 11 August Baade oversaw the movement of 3,631 troops and 801 vehicles. By 14 August that had been raised to 7,424 troops, 600 casualties, 1,380 vehicles, and 42 guns. Two of the ferry routes operated from 1 to 15 August moved totals of 14,282 troops, 13,352 casualties, 4,560 vehicles, and 35 guns to safety. In contrast to Dunkirk, the Germans evacuated large numbers of vehicles.



Above Not quite what Uncle Joe had in mind, but better than nothing. Russian propaganda makes the best of the Anglo-American 'Second Front' against Italy, depicting Fascist dictator Mussolini **[inset]** as a forlorn figure on a worn-out boot awaiting a mainland invasion.

Evacuation

As the Germans made their escape, the Allied command missed a staggering opportunity to attack the ferries plying their way across the narrow straits. Discord at senior levels ensured that no single unified approach to dealing with the problem emerged.

The straits were too narrow for major Royal Navy units to operate, and concern was raised on more than one occasion about the German batteries overlooking the area. Admiral Cunningham was perhaps understandably reluctant to commit major surface units into the area. The grievous losses incurred during the evacuation of Crete no doubt proved a factor in his decision-making. He saw the task as one for the Royal Air Force.

The RAF, however, was unable to muster the kind of firepower required. They were also deterred by the considerable anti-aircraft defensive positions in the area. Air raids were conducted at night and in the early hours to little effect.

The result was that the main elements of the German Army on Sicily were successfully evacuated from Messina. Unlike in other campaigns, the German high command did not issue a directive denying their troops the opportunity to retreat. As a result the German Army lived to fight another day – and to make the Italian campaign long and hard.

OPERATION HUSKY

Continued from page 41

The debacle at the Kasserine Pass during the North African campaign hung like a shadow over the planning for Operation Husky. As far as Montgomery was concerned, the British Eight Army had proved itself at El Alamein; as far as the military qualities of the Americans were concerned, the jury was still out. The relationship between Patton and Montgomery had got off to a bad start. It was one from which it was never to recover.

Patton accepted a line of command running through British General Alexander. Montgomery simply went around it. In the end he got his own way despite having to overcome significant opposition from Admiral Cunningham and Air Chief Marshal Tedder, the naval and air commanders for the operation. They crossed swords with Montgomery on more than one occasion.

Patton noted in his diaries his impression that Montgomery would never go into battle without all the dice loaded in his favour. Patton was a more instinctive commander. He left the detailed planning to his staff and focused on the morale and combat-readiness of his army.

The race to Messina

Once the landings were accomplished, Patton focused on one thing: he wanted to beat the British Eighth Army into Messina. By driving his men to extraordinary feats of endeavour against a well-armed, well-supplied, well-dug-in, and highly disciplined German force on Sicily, he managed it with less than an hour to spare.

It was a moment to savour. El Alamein defined Montgomery; Sicily showed Patton's strengths as an army commander.

As the battle for Sicily drew to a close, General Eisenhower's thoughts turned to the next stage of the Allied campaign. This was the invasion of Italy. In reflecting on what he had learnt during Operation Torch and Operation Husky, Eisenhower must have felt that on occasions his plan to try to form an integrated Allied command team had come close to failure. From here on it would be different. In Italy the Americans would take the lead. Montgomery, for all his manoeuvrings, would play second fiddle.

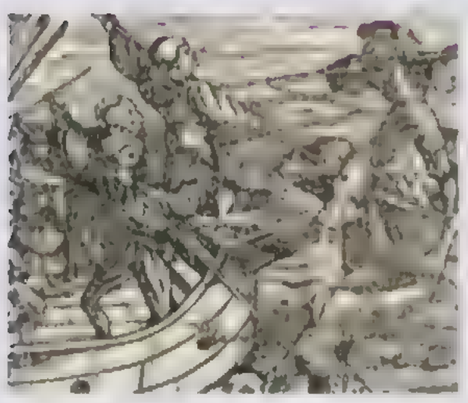
Eighth Army men wade ashore during the invasion of Sicily.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Dave Sloggett has over 40 years' experience in the military intelligence arena and is a regular lecturer to NATO and allied command groups on contemporary and historical aspects of warfare.

EDUCATION IN FOCUS

Studying Military History



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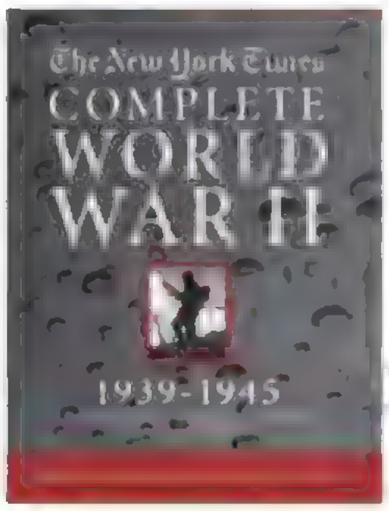

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MUSEUM GUIDE

With hundreds of military museums in the UK alone, how do you know which one will best suit your interests? Here, ***MHM*** has picked some of the best museums and exhibitions to visit, from hidden gems to long-established sites.

Tangmere Military Aviation Museum

The museum has been located on the edge of the former RAF airfield since 1982. Between 1918 and 1970 RAF Tangmere was an operational airfield, known particularly for the pivotal role it played during the Battle of Britain.

The museum contains many fascinating artefacts and exhibits from this period in Tangmere's history, including an excavated Hurricane shot down during the Battle. It is also home to two world record-breaking aircraft as well as other aircraft of WWII and the Cold War Era. Exhibits and displays recall WWI, Bomber Command, and the SOE operations carried out from Tangmere. Also available are simulators, including our Lightning Simulator (adults only), our Combat Simulator for the kids, and so much more!

Events for 2014 include 'Classic Wheels' on 8 June (classic cars and military vehicles) and 'Tangmere's Tribute to The Great War – August 1914' on 3 August.

WHERE: Tangmere, West Sussex, PO20 2ES
OPENING TIMES: 10am - 5.30pm
CONTACT: 01243 790090
www.tangmere-museum.org.uk

Royal Air Force Museum London

PILOTS OF THE CARIBBEAN: VOLUNTEERS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

In two World Wars black people from the Caribbean, Africa, and from Britain volunteered to serve in the Royal Air Force. These volunteers fought and died for the Mother Country and for freedom, and thereby helped to preserve the values and the heritage they shared with their white comrades. The tradition of service to the Crown continues today, and the RAF is proud to welcome new generations of black volunteers into its ranks.

In a brand new exhibition, curated in partnership with the Black Cultural Archives, the Royal Air Force Museum will tell the inspirational story of these volunteers.

WHERE: RAF Museum London - Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL
OPENING TIMES: Open Daily 10am - 6pm
CONTACT: 020 8205 2266
london@rafmuseum.org
www.rafmuseum.org.uk

In Flanders Fields Museum

The exhibition tells the story of the First World War in the West Flemish Front. It narrates the invasion of Belgium, the first months of the war of movements, and the subsequent four years of trench warfare in Westhoek, from the beach of Nieuwpoort to the Lys in Armentières. The museum chronicles the war right up to its end in 1918, detailing the commemorations which have continued for nearly 100 years.

Since 1999, the museum has organised its layout to emphasise the importance of the human experience of war – the personal testimonials with which visitors are able to connect. The Belgian backdrop provides a touch of authenticity to visitors' journeys through the museum. From the Belfry, visitors are able to survey the blasted landscapes that bore witness to 1914 conflict.

WHERE: Lakenhalle, Grote Markt, B8900 Ieper, Belgium
OPENING TIMES: 1 April - 15 Nov 10am - 6pm, 16 Nov - 31 March 10am - 5pm
CONTACT: +32(0)57 239 220
flandersfields@ieper.be
www.inflandersfields.be

Royalty on the battlefield

Prince Harry's return from duty in Afghanistan earlier this year received much media coverage. The link between the royals and the military goes back a long way. Historian Carolyn Harris explores.

Prince Harry faced criticism for his frank comments about his tour of duty. He had served as an Apache helicopter co-pilot gunner during his 20-week deployment, protecting ground troops from Taliban attacks. In this role, Harry stated, he was willing to kill Taliban insurgents to protect his fellow soldiers.

The Prince explained in one interview, 'Take a life to save a life. That's what we revolve around, I suppose. If there's people trying to do bad stuff to our guys, then we'll take them out of the game.'

When asked about balancing military and royal duties, Harry made clear, 'Army comes first. It's my work at the end of the day.' He might just as easily have said that military service was his most important royal duty.

Civilian audiences found Prince Harry's stated willingness to kill enemy combatants and enthusiasm for the soldier's life uncomfortable, prompting columnist Harry Mount of the *Daily Telegraph* to write that the Prince should 'speak more like royalty and less like an army officer'.

Neither the controversy provoked by Harry's remarks nor Mount's reprimand make much sense in the context of British history. The roles of prince and army officer have been synonymous as long as there has been a monarchy. Princes throughout history have raised their standing through military achievement, and wars have acquired legitimacy through royal participation.

> If there's people trying to do bad stuff to our guys, then we'll take them out of the game.
>
> ***Prince Harry on the Taliban***

Boudica and Arthur

The earliest kings in the British Isles were military leaders first and foremost. The legendary King Arthur may have been a Romano-British leader who fought the invading Anglo-Saxon forces at some point in the late 5th or early 6th century. Queen Boudica of the Iceni had managed briefly to unite many of the Celtic tribes of eastern Britain against the Romans. Her forces destroyed three Romano-British cities before being defeated in AD 60 or 61.

Although both Arthur and Boudica undoubtedly fought to protect their own territory and land rather than as patriotic defenders of British 'freedom', they became part of a national mythology of warrior-monarchs fighting glorious battles on behalf of their people.

Boudica's statue stands outside the Houses of Parliament as a symbol of British nationalism. It is inscribed with words from William Cowper's *Boadicea: An Ode*: 'Regions Caesar never knew / Thy posterity shall sway'. This despite the fact that the rebel queen was responsible for burning down London!

The legend of King Arthur informed the image of numerous later English kings. Henry II selected the name Arthur for his grandson, Arthur of Brittany. Edward I commissioned an imitation Arthurian round-table for Winchester. Henry VII named his eldest son Arthur.

Both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge have Arthur as one of their middle names, and bookmakers were taking bets that it would be one of the names used if the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's first child was a boy. By continuing to use Arthur as a royal name, the current royal family is placing itself within a royal military tradition going back at least 1,500 years, thereby proclaiming their legitimacy. ▷

Image: © Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

Right The glamour of royalty and the glory of war have been combined in British culture for more than a millennium. King Arthur provides the mythic prototype. Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones captures the spirit in his *The Arming and Departure of the Knights of the Round Table in the Quest for the Holy Grail* of *c*.1890.
Above Arthur is myth. Boudica was real. But she has been endlessly reinvented as an archetype of the British warrior-monarch. This recent reconstruction by Ivan Lapper is distinguished by the seriousness of its attempt at realism.

All images: © WIPL, unless otherwise stated

Above An 1884 poster advertising a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The role of kings on the battlefield is a central theme in many of the Bard's tragedies and history plays, reflecting its significance in English culture on the cusp of the modern age.

Below Small but fierce: Charles I, who was only 5ft 4in, attempts to lead a charge on the battlefield of Naseby (he was prevented by his entourage, who had decided the battle was lost).

Dark Age warriors

The royal succession was originally determined by ability and experience on the battlefield. In Anglo-Saxon England, the theoretical succession rights of a monarch's young children were often passed over in favour of the claims of a seasoned warrior who seized the crown by conquest.

When Edmund Ironside died in 1016, for example, England fell to the Danish King Canute, while the former king's young children went into exile, unable to assert any claim to the throne until they became adults.

In Scotland during the same period, anyone who had a least a great grandfather who had been king was eligible to claim throne. The 11th-century reign of Macbeth – dramatised by Shakespeare more than 500 years later – followed this pattern.

The historical Macbeth, who may have been a grandson of King Malcolm II, defeated King Duncan in battle. This military victory allowed Macbeth to advance his claim to the Scottish throne over the hereditary rights of Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain. Malcolm did not succeed to the Scottish throne as King Malcolm III until after Macbeth's death, when he eliminated Macbeth's stepson and successor Lulach.

The warrior role of a medieval monarch prevented the undisputed succession of a woman ruler in either England or Scotland before the 16th century. In addition to some form of hereditary claim and the sacral rite of coronation, prowess on the battlefield was essential to the legitimacy. Those English monarchs who lost their thrones prior to the 1936 abdication of Edward VIII – such as Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI, Richard III, and Charles I – all suffered military defeats of some sort.

Hastings: the propaganda war

While success on the battlefield has legitimised monarchs for hundreds of years, the presence of a prince in command has never guaranteed battlefield success, and royal military leaders have often had recourse to additional methods to recruit and retain soldiers.

In 1066, both King Harold II of England and William, Duke of Normandy, effectively 'glamourised'

> Stained with vice, a cruel murderer, purse proud, and puffed up with the profits of pillage, an enemy of justice and all good.
>
> ***William of Poitiers on King Harold II***

their causes to raise support. Neither Harold nor William had a close hereditary connection to the previous Anglo-Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, and the outcome of a pitched battle between the two sides was uncertain, so their ability effectively to 'sell' their respective claims to their retinues was crucial.

Harold had the easier task. The Anglo-Saxon assembly of the most prominent nobles, the Witenagemot or 'meeting of wise men', endorsed Harold's claim to the throne and he had been crowned in Westminster Abbey within days of Edward the Confessor's death. The turmoil created by the Danish invasions of the 10th and 11th centuries was still within living memory, and Harold represented stability.

For the Anglo-Saxon nobility, moreover, a Norman conquest threatened the loss of their lands and incomes as William rewarded his supporters with English estates. Harold undoubtedly presented the conflict with William of Normandy as a defensive war that would prevent the seizure of Anglo-Saxon land by Norman invaders.

Relics and insults

In contrast, William had to present powerful arguments for his vassals to attempt the dangerous crossing from Normandy to England for the uncertain prospect of defeating Harold's forces and plundering England.

As the Bayeux Tapestry depicts, William persuaded reluctant supporters to join his fleet by presenting the Norman invasion of England as a religious crusade. The tapestry shows Harold, on a visit to Normandy a few years before Edward the Confessor's death, swearing on holy relics that he would not seize the English crown. William convinced Pope Alexander II to bless his expedition on the basis of Harold's repudiation of his holy oath, and he carried the relics under his tunic throughout the invasion of England.

Above A romanticised 19th-century book illustration that depicts the last stand of King Harold II at Hastings.

The Norman usurper also defamed Harold's character. The chronicler William of Poitiers wrote that William of Normandy described Harold as 'stained with vice, a cruel murderer, purse proud, and puffed up with the profits of pillage, an enemy of justice and all good'. The invaders, as so often in history, were portraying themselves as 'liberators'.

The Lancastrian Henry VI (1422-1461) **[above left]** and the Yorkist Edward IV (1461-1483) **[above right]**. One factor in the outcome of the Wars of the Roses was that the Lancastrian king was a pious, bookish, retiring man dominated by his foreign wife, whereas his Yorkist opponent was a first-class commander and a towering warrior (at 6ft 4in, the tallest king in English history).

To maintain morale, William also minimised the real dangers of the crossing from Normandy to England. His fleet initially rendezvoused at Dives, where his army was assembled. To reduce the length of the crossing, he then moved the ships filled with soldiers to St Valery, at the mouth of the Somme. When a few ships were lost during this brief voyage – far less treacherous than the planned Channel crossing – he concealed the fact and had bodies washed ashore buried secretly.

Victory on Senlac Hill

William of Normandy's victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 owed much to the fortunate timing of the invasion. Harold had just defeated ▷

the forces of King Harold Hardrada of Norway at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, and his forces were reduced and exhausted by the time they reached Hastings.

The very presence of the Norman force on English soil, on the other hand, was testimony to William's glamourisation of the war. Downplaying his own ambition and the huge operational risks, he focused on the invasion as holy war against a tyrannical leader and played up the prospects of plunder, estates, and other rewards.

William's victory proved that, while anointed monarchs held an advantage on the battlefield, they could still be defeated if military force was combined with black propaganda. One of the most effective ways of discrediting royal military leaders was by convincing their subjects that they were 'foreign' in either background or religion, and that their challengers were the true heirs to the national mythology dating back to King Arthur.

Foreign women

The perceived influence of a foreign-born queen was often a key component of propaganda. Simon de Montfort was able to muster opposition to King Henry III in the 13th century by deploring the influence and wealth of Queen Eleanor of Provence's Savoyard relatives and Dowager Queen Isabelle of Angoulême's children at court.

The Yorkist claimants to the English throne persuaded supporters of the Lancastrian Henry VI to shift their allegiance because the mentally unstable king was championed by his foreign-born queen, Margaret of Anjou. The Yorkist King Edward IV made a point of marrying an English noblewoman.

Six years before Parliament tried and executed Charles I in 1649, the French-born Roman Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria had been impeached by the House of Commons on eight charges, including bringing foreign mercenaries into England to fight for the Royalist cause and allegedly inciting the Irish revolt.

Even the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was prompted by rumours that the child born to James II's Roman Catholic Italian wife had been smuggled into the royal bedchamber in a warming pan.

By the 16th and 17th centuries, an English-born queen regnant such as Elizabeth I or Queen Anne could embody English nationalism by publicly addressing or praying for her forces, but suspected military activity by a foreign-born queen consort had the potential to undermine the legitimacy of her husband's rule.

George II at Dettingen

Even after the reaffirmation of constitutional monarchy following the Glorious Revolution, the precedents set by past British royalty on the battlefield continued to shape the relationship between monarchs and the military.

King George II was the last British monarch to lead troops in person, at the Battle of Dettingen during the War of the Austrian Succession in 1743. Although the King's actual contribution to the course of the battle was negligible, British artists and writers glorified his leadership as symbolic of the nation's military tradition. The composer George Frideric Handel composed a *Te Deum* in his honour, and John Wootton painted an epic portrait of the King on horseback surveying the battlefield (now on display at the National Army Museum). The King's participation deflected potential criticism of British involvement in a foreign war because the monarch symbolised the nation and its interests.

Following George II's exploit, it was the younger sons of monarchs and their heirs, the Prince Harrys of their day, who continued the centuries-old tradition of royal service in the military. This allowed the princes to take up a respected profession that would both enhance their personal reputations and glamourise imperial wars. During the American and French Revolutionary Wars, for example, King George III's sons William, Duke of Clarence, and Edward, the future Duke of Kent, served overseas, making the monarchy synonymous with the emergence of a worldwide British Empire.

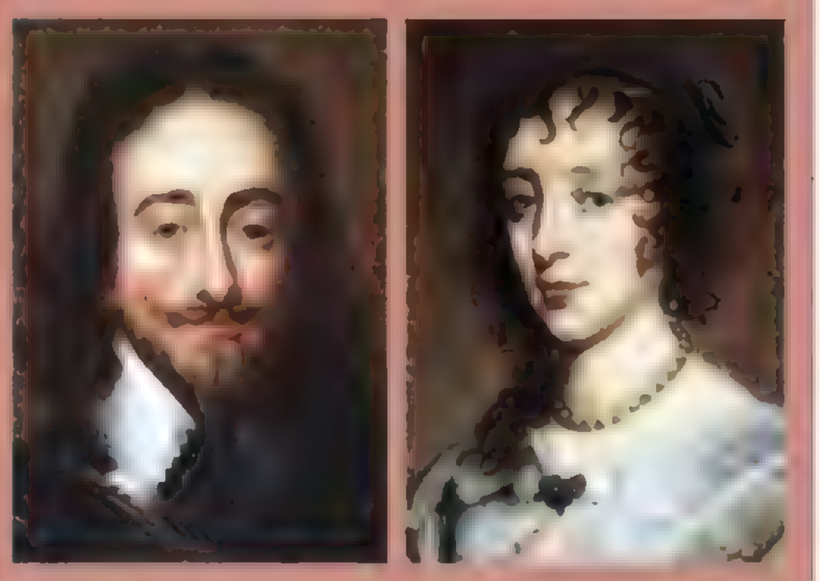
Monarchy and empire

Local leaders whom the British encountered abroad expected to deal directly with members of the royal family as a mark of respect for their own authority. During the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War of 1895-1896, for example, Ashanti leaders in what is now Ghana approved of the presence of Queen

PATRIARCHY & PROPAGANDA

Weak kings and their foreign wives were a recurring theme in English political discourse. Battlefield achievement was a clear measure of a king's authority in relation to his own household.

Henry VII (1485-1509) took Elizabeth of York as his wife, thus uniting the Lancastrian and Yorkist factions, and providing a solidly English mother for his sons, Arthur (*sic*) and Henry (who, due to his elder brother's premature death, succeeded his father).



Charles I (1625-1649) took the French Catholic Henrietta Maria as his wife, a dynastic match that proved also to be a love match. It was a gift to the monarch's Puritan opponents in Parliament.

Regions Caesar never knew / Thy posterity shall sway

William Cowper on Boudica

Above The Duke of Cambridge (1819-1904). The cousin of Queen Victoria, he was the head of the British Army from 1856 to 1895, a remarkable instance of the close relationship between royalty and the military. In this case it was not an altogether happy relationship: Cambridge was a military conservative who resisted modernisation.

Above He may not have distinguished himself, but he was there: King George II (1727-1760) was the last British monarch to lead his men on the battlefield, at the Battle of Dettingen in 1743, during the War of the Austrian Succession.

Victoria's son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, as the involvement of British royalty in the conflict appeared to demonstrate that Ashanti grievances and military might were taken seriously by the Crown.

Although most of Britain's former colonies eventually won their independence in the course of the 20th century, the continuing existence of the Commonwealth is symbolised by the fact that Queen Elizabeth II is the formal head of state in 16 countries and members of the royal family are honorary colonels-in-chief of local regiments in these countries.

In the early 21st century, Prince Harry is the most visible face of royal participation in British military action overseas. Observers often compare him to his uncle, Prince Andrew, who achieved great popularity in the 1982 Falklands War, or his grandfather, Prince Philip, who served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War.

But Harry belongs to a much older tradition of royalty glamourising war. For centuries the monarchy and the military have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship.

The royals have achieved legitimacy and popularity through military service. In the past, indeed, their very right to govern was bound up with their military prowess. For the military, on the other hand, the armed forces and the conflicts in which they engage receive positive publicity through royal participation, and attention is distracted from both the causes and the consequences of war.

When Harry went to war in Afghanistan, he affirmed his place in a tradition dating back to the Arthurian legends. He became, for a time, the most prominent face of Britain's involvement in a controversial and unpopular war.

But instead of criticising Harry for behaving as a soldier instead of a prince, the British press should perhaps have looked back to his predecessors over the past thousand years. For the role of soldier and prince have been synonymous for as long as England and Scotland have been monarchies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Further information

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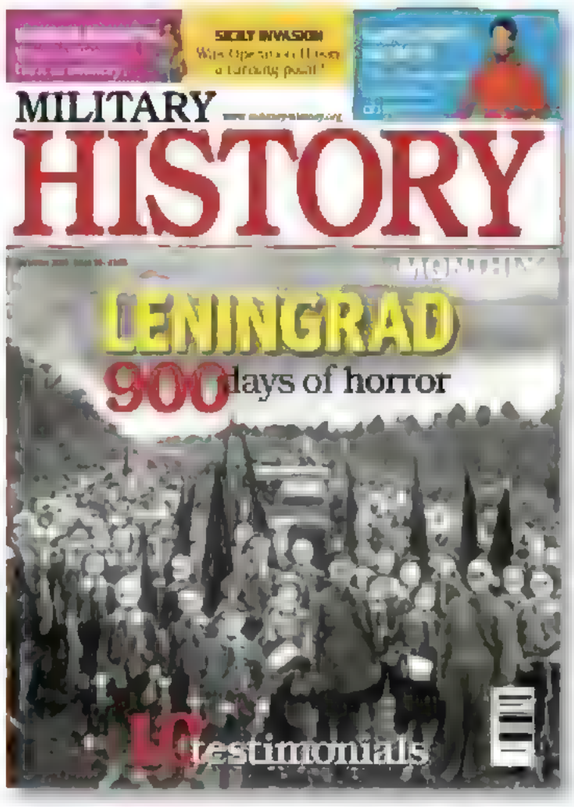

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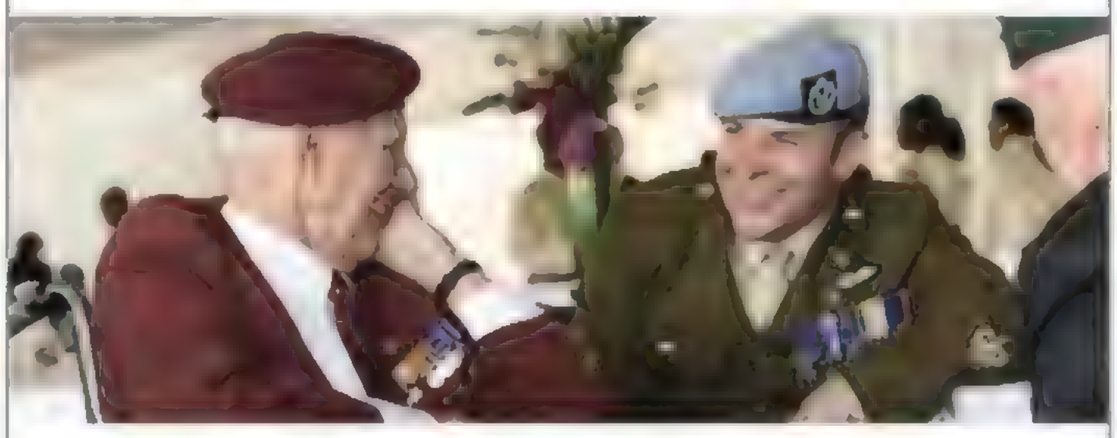

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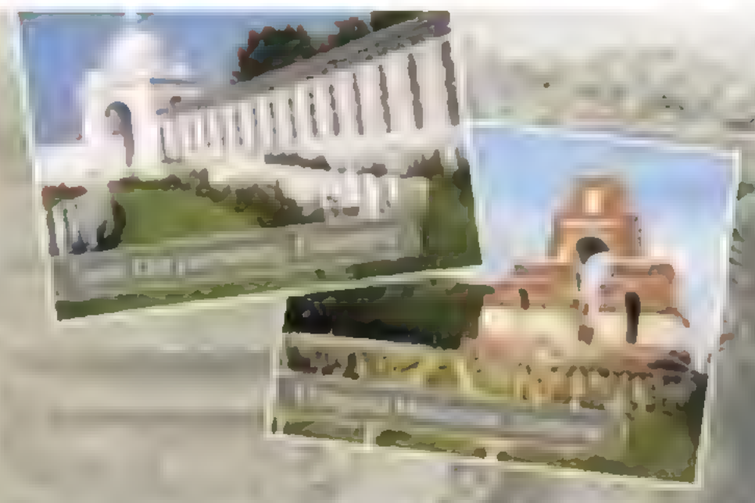

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Pashtun uprising

As US drones attack Waziristan, **Jules Stewart** recalls British efforts to subjugate resistance in the North-West Frontier more than a century ago.

'We had no grievance against the British Government, but the mullahs were too powerful for us, Sahib.' In these words a young Afridi tribesman of the North-West Frontier explained the uprising of 1897. Tens of thousands of Pashtun warriors were in open revolt in the greatest threat to British rule in India since the Sepoy Mutiny 40 years earlier. The Afridi's interrogator was Colonel Sir Robert Warburton, former Political Officer of the Khyber, and the man who better than any British official understood the ways of the Pashtun.

A young war correspondent was covering the uprising for the *Daily Telegraph*: Winston Churchill. He was not over-dramatising the threat when he said, 'The whole British Raj seemed [to be] passing away in a single cataclysm.'

Churchill voiced characteristically strong opinions on where to place the blame for the rebellion: 'A vast but silent agitation was begun. Messengers passed to and fro among the tribes. Whispers of war, a holy war, were breathed to a race intensely passionate and fanatical. Vast and mysterious agencies, the force of which is incomprehensible to rational minds, were employed... Actual support and assistance was given from Kabul.' If it was verbose, that was because Churchill was aware that the *Telegraph* paid by the column inch.

The Durand Line

The origins of the conflict can be traced to 1893 and the signing of a treaty between Foreign Secretary of India Sir Mortimer Durand and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman, demarcating the boundary line between Afghanistan and British India. The specialist in Afghan history Bijan Omrani maintains that a strategic objective of the Amir after the signing of the Durand Treaty was to keep the wider Pashtun world under his fealty. 'The tribes on the other side of the Line were called upon as a support to the Afghan throne, in particular during times of disturbance,' he says.

That the 1897 tribal uprising was inspired and embraced, if not actually engineered, by Abdur Rahman is beyond dispute. Even as the tribes were revolting, in October 1897, a *jirga* of Afridi tribesmen in Kabul was being sold a collection of fairytales alleging that the British Empire was crumbling.

The Sultan of Constantinople had captured Aden and even the Suez Canal, which had then been leased to Russia. The defeated infidel power in the recent Turkish war was not Greece but Britain, and the Germans, French, and Russians had taken up arms against the British at all seaports and were attacking them in Egypt.

Even more encouraging was the news that Abdur Rahman had now adopted the title of Zia-ul-Millat-Wa-ud Din ▷

> The whole British Raj seemed [to be] passing away in a single cataclysm.
>
> *Winston Churchill*

Right A British column advances through the North-West Frontier in the late 1890s. Revolts of the Pashtun hill-tribes were a perennial problem for the Anglo-Indian Army, but the explosion of resistance between 1895 and 1897 was on an unprecedented scale, eventually necessitating the dispatch of a huge expeditionary force of more than 50,000 men.

All images: © WIPL **Map:** Ian Bull

TIMELINE

1893

November Sir Mortimer Durand reaches agreement with Amir Abdur Rahman on demarcation of the boundary between Afghanistan and British India. The Durand Line cuts through tribal communities and even bisects some villages.

1894

November Boundary Commission camped in South Waziristan attacked by a war party of Mahsud tribesmen, incited by notorious firebrand Mullah Powindah.

December General Sir William Lockhart raises Field Force to punish the Mahsuds. Rebels defeated by March 1895.

1895

March Chitral Fort besieged by thousands of tribesmen. Relieved in July, after a 200-mile march from Gilgit by Colonel James Kelly.

1897

June Peace suddenly broken when Madda Khel Pashtuns of Yusufzai tribe attack Political Officer's escort at Maizar, in the Tochi Valley, south of Peshawar, killing and wounding several British officers.

July Malakand tribes rise, flocking to the banner of Sadullah, known as the 'Mad Mullah'. Forts at Malakand and Chakdara are besieged by Mohmand tribesmen, many of them having crossed from Afghanistan.

August Khyber forts attacked. Abandoned by Khyber Rifles when the Peshawar garrison refuses reinforcements. Khyber Pass falls to rebels.

September Fanatical cleric Hadda Mullah fans the flames of revolt in Mohmand territory. General Sir Bindon Blood leads Malakand Field Force of three brigades and crushes uprising.

October General Lockhart takes an expeditionary force into Tirah Valley. After two months' hard campaigning, Afridis surrender.

1898

April Last *maliks* of the hostile tribes come forward to surrender. The Pashtun uprising is over.

Above General Sir Bindon Blood (1842-1940), commander of the Malakand Field Force in 1897.

('Light of Union and Faith'), and had produced a book which treated of jihad.

Rifles from Kabul

Warburton himself had put out a warning in May 1897 that Peshawar was buzzing with reports of a Turkish agent who had arrived in Kabul and through Abdur Rahman's good offices been introduced to all the noted mullahs. They had been told to go out and preach religious war against the British.

Some 80,000 rifles, manufactured in Kabul under British supervision, were sold to the Frontier tribes at an almost giveaway price. This the Amir could well afford, since he drew a substantial subsidy from the British Government to ensure his friendship.

The warnings continued to flow in – and were summarily disregarded, even by officials supposedly close to the situation, like Sir Richard Udny, Commissioner of the Peshawar District. 'Everything quiet,' reads Udny's dispatch of mid-August to the Viceroy.

The first stirrings of trouble manifested themselves in 1894 in South Waziristan, when the incendiary Mullah Powindah incited the Mahsuds to slaughter a party of Boundary Commission officers and surveyors. The attack was roundly avenged by a column under General Sir William Lockhart – an event which put the fearsome Mahsuds out of action in the approaching Frontier conflict.

Chitral

The most dramatic prelude to the Pashtun uprising was the siege and relief of Chitral Fort in March-April 1895. This was *Boy's Own* stuff, which has taken pride of place in the folklore of Victorian gallantry of arms.

After more than a month under siege by seditious Chitrali tribesmen, with the 370-strong garrison plagued by disease and hunger (pack animals were slaughtered for food), the fort was on the verge of being overrun. Then, on 18 April, Colonel James Kelly's column came to the rescue, guns blazing like the 7th Cavalry in a Western.

Kelly had ridden hell-for-leather at the head of 400 men for a fortnight, starting from Gilgit more than 200 miles to the east and passing over the treacherous 12,000-foot Shandur Pass, marching through knee-deep snow, without tents, and carrying minimum baggage.

The strategic importance of Chitral could not be over-estimated. This was the northernmost of Frontier territory under British dominion, and hence the closest to Russian-held territory. It was crucial for the British to impress upon the Russians that the northern territories were firmly under control.

The Tochi Valley

Quite unexpectedly, there followed a two-year period of peace on the Frontier. 'Truce' would be a more accurate word, for during Britain's century of presence on the North-West Frontier, periods of peace could never be interpreted as anything but a lull between hostilities.

The spark of open revolt was ignited in June 1897. The scene was Maizar, five miles from the Afghan border in the Tochi Valley. The tribesmen refused to pay a fine owed under the policy of ▷

The protagonists. **Top** Pashtun hill-tribesmen of the North-West Frontier, photographed in the 1890s. **Right** NCOs of the 1st Sikh Infantry, Anglo-Indian Army.

Above Map of the North-West Frontier in the 1890s, showing the locations of the major clashes during the revolts of 1895-1897.

collective punishment, the doctrine that required an entire village or clan to pay compensation for any act of banditry committed by their brethren.

The Political Agent Henry Gee had made his way to the scene of the dispute with an escort of more than 300 Sikh and Punjabi infantrymen. The troops were kindly received by the villagers, who laid on a late breakfast for their guests. Had Gee been aware that his visit coincided with the observance of Muharram, which the tribesmen consider an auspicious time for martyrdom, he might have approached the meeting with greater caution.

The party was enjoying a relaxed meal in the shade of a banyan grove when suddenly a tribesman was observed waving his sword from the top of a tower – the signal to attack. The troops had walked into a trap which left 72 men killed by the end of the morning.

In retaliation, the Army assembled two brigades to march on the Tochi Valley, which on arrival they found deserted. They then spent 16 days destroying settlements and towers so as to render the tribesmen homeless and destitute. Sporadic skirmishing went on until November, when the Tochi Field Force was able to proclaim the valley 'pacified'.

Malakand and Chakdara

The Pastuns in other districts were inspired to rise by news coming in from Malakand and Chakdara forts. In July 1897 the British garrisons found themselves in a desperate situation, with more than 20,000 heavily armed tribesmen led by Sadullah, the 'Mad Mullah', baying for their blood.

So unsuspected had these attacks been that the officers at Malakand found themselves engaged in a chukka of polo when their Pashtun scouts galloped up to warn them of the approaching horde.

Churchill summed up the action in one of his rip-roaring dispatches. 'In the attack on the Malakand camp all the elements of danger and disorder were displayed. The surprise, the darkness, the confused and broken nature of the ground, the unknown numbers of the enemy, their merciless ferocity, every appalling circumstance was present. But there were men who were equal to the occasion.'

The Malakand and Chakdara outposts had been built on the line of communication with Chitral, and in defiance of strong opposition from the Swati tribesmen. The two garrisons formed part of the Frontier strategy to safeguard road links between army headquarters in Peshawar and Dir district to the north. A section of this road shared a border with Afghanistan and could therefore be used as an invasion route into British territory through the Shingara Pass.

When the Viceroy Lord Elgin grasped the seriousness of the threat to the Swat garrisons, he instructed the splendidly named General Sir Bindon Blood to raise three brigades to put down the seditious tribes. These were beaten into submission in early August. Blood's column consisted of 10,000 men, a massive body of soldiers for a North-West Frontier operation, though it represented only a fraction of the 75,000 troops who were eventually mobilised in the two years of the general revolt.

Above A contemporary artist's impression of typical fighting on the North-West Frontier: a party of Northamptons are forced to make a fighting withdrawal down a *nullah* (gully) in the face of unexpectedly tough resistance.

Below left The terrain. Engineers and labourers of the Anglo-Indian Army making a road in Chitral district in the 1890s. The logistical aspect of operating large forces on the North-West Frontier was as much of a challenge as the resistance of the tribesmen.
Below right Contemporary image of the 1897 campaign showing an Indian battalion waiting to advance as the army deploys for action.
Inset General Sir William Lockhart (1841-1900), commander of the Tirah Field Force in 1897.

The Khyber Pass

In August of that year the revolt spread to the Khyber district, where the Afridi and Orakzai tribes, goaded by their mullahs, laid siege to Khyber Rifles garrisons in

the Pass. When Peshawar refused to send Regular Army reinforcements to relieve the siege, whole units of Khyber Rifles abandoned their posts and fled to the countryside, many taking their weapons with them.

Without British officers to bolster morale and keep them at their posts, left to the mercy of frenzied mullahs threatening the levies with eternal damnation, confused by false tales of the fall of Peshawar and the defeat of British troops, it is little wonder that the tribal recruits deserted their posts. It was not until December 1898 that Brigadier-General Henry Hammond, commanding a column brought up from Peshawar, recaptured the key trade and military route between India and Afghanistan.

After the humiliating loss of the Khyber Pass, Lockhart was summoned from home leave in England to organise the Tirah Field Force, with the objective of forcing the first ever incursion by foreign troops into the Pashtuns' sacred valley. The general made clear his objective was to accept nothing short of unconditional surrender, and to his men he issued this warning: 'It must be remembered that the Force is opposed to perhaps the best skirmishers and best natural rifle-shots in the world, and that the country they inhabit is probably the most difficult on the face of the globe. The enemy's strength lies in his knowledge of the country, which enables him to watch our movements unperceived by us, and to take advantage of every rise in the ground and every ravine.'

The Dargai Heights

The Tirah Field Force was composed of two divisions, and its 34,500 fighting men and 20,000 non-combatants made up the largest army raised in India since the Sepoy Mutiny.

By 18 October, Lockhart's column had penetrated the Tirah, where hostilities opened with an attack on the Samana Ridge. The troops were ordered to take the hill, but the men were unable to cross the exposed zone of fire. Lockhart called for the Gordon Highlanders to charge the hilltop.

The battalion colonel rallied his men with the cry, 'The General says this hill must be taken at all costs. The Gordon Highlanders will take it!' With this, the men surged forward into a hail of bullets, determined to dislodge the enemy from the Dargai Heights, the summit of the Samana Ridge.

The Scots swept away all resistance as they charged, and in less than 40 minutes the regimental colours were flying from the summit. The Gordon Highlanders gave three cheers, and as their colonel emerged rather breathlessly onto the ridge, he commented to a colour-sergeant, 'Stiff climb, eh, Mackie?'

The charge produced an act of gallantry that is commemorated in the Gordon Highlanders' regimental museum in Aberdeen, where Piper George Findlater's VC stands on display. Findlater took bullets in both ankles, but despite his wounds he continued playing his pipes to the tunes of 'Cock O' the North' and 'The Haughs O' Cromdale', before he passed out from loss of blood.

Queen Victoria herself visited Findlater in hospital to award the VC. He was pronounced unfit for further military service, but such was his celebrity that he was able to command considerable fees by playing his pipes in music halls.

Hard-won peace

After two months of hard campaigning, Lockhart received the submission of the *maliks*, marking the end of the Pashtun revolt.

The Government of India had emerged victorious from its most testing confrontation with the Pashtun tribes, at a cost of 1,150 British and Indian casualties. It required the deployment of 64 British and Indian infantry battalions – 23 more than the entire infantry strength of the British Army a century later – to restore the Queen's peace.

The uprising brought to light the Raj's failed Frontier policy. On the one hand, the British made no effort to improve the tribesmen's lot, always treating them as a military instead of a social and economic problem. Likewise, the British failed to realise that they were dealing with a people who were really part of Central Asia and not India. Both these facts might well be taken into account in Britain's current engagement with the Pashtun tribes of the Frontier and Afghanistan.

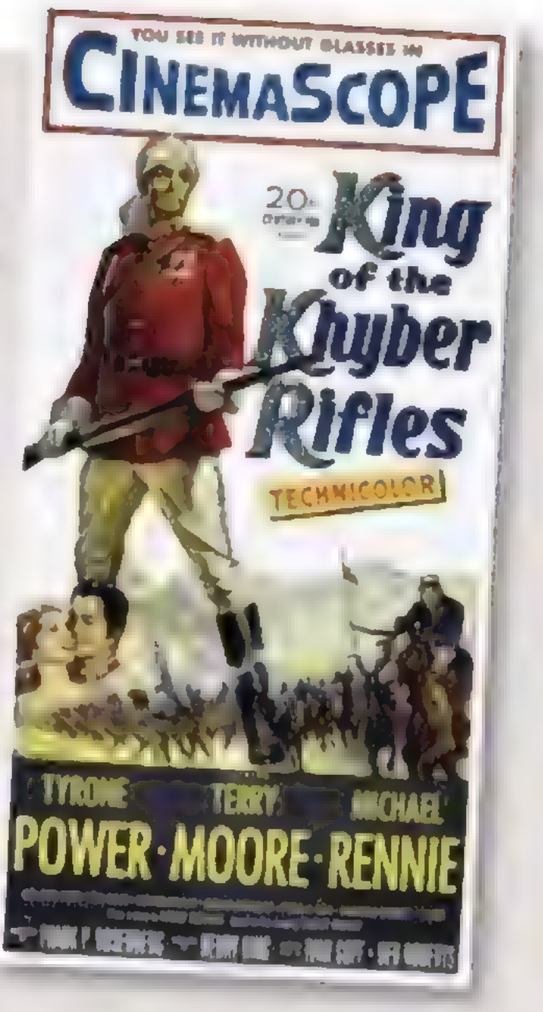
COLONEL SIR ROBERT WARBURTON

Warburton, the son of an Afghan princess and a British artillery officer, was a colourful and romantic soldier of the North-West Frontier. Yet this unsung hero ended his career broken in spirit by his failure to prevent the Pashtun uprising of 1897, and no less so by the foul treatment he suffered at the hands of the political Establishment.

Warburton was born in an Afghan fort in 1842, and grew up in the mould of Kipling's boy-hero Kim. He spoke fluent Pashtu and felt more at home with the Pashtun tribesmen of the North-West Frontier than in the staid environment of the British cantonments. Warburton was packed off to the Kensington Grammar School in London. He then entered the Woolwich Military Academy and emerged a staunch defender of empire.

In 1878 Warburton was serving as Political Officer of the Khyber when the Army was making preparations for its Afghan campaign. The crucial invasion route through the Khyber Pass had to be secured, so Warburton came up with a plan to turn poachers into gamekeepers. He raised the first native militia on the Frontier, the Khyber Rifles, men who, for a salary and a rifle, were prepared to fire on their own kith and kin.

Accepted as one of their own, Warburton – the role model for the 1953 Tyrone Power film *King of the Khyber Rifles* – commanded fierce loyalty from these Pashtun warriors, and whenever trouble broke out in the Khyber Pass he walked among them unarmed to persuade them to restore the peace.



Above The film based on the career of Colonel Sir Robert Warburton.

In 1897 Warburton left the Frontier. Thousands of tribesmen thronged the Peshawar railway station to bid him farewell. But the lion-tamer had left the den and there was now no one to keep the peace in the Khyber.

In England Warburton was received by Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, and the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury. All his life he had laboured courageously, ignoring the mistrust of his Establishment colleagues, to pacify the Pashtuns. The political class grudgingly acknowledged him as the man for the job, but they showed him no gratitude – quite the contrary.

Only once did Warburton express anger in his memoirs, and that was when the Government cut his salary without offering any explanation. It was Salisbury who took up Warburton's cause and wrote to Queen Victoria, complaining that 'racism is too deeply ingrained in official British society to be rooted out'. Warburton retired to his house in Kensington, where he died in 1899.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jules Stewart is the author of *The Kaiser's Mission to Kabul*, due to be published by I B Tauris in spring 2014.

THE ROYAL STAR & GARTER HOMES

MHM's homage to Britain's war charities and the people they support.

Continuing our regular feature profiling military charities, *MHM* focuses on a 96-year-old organisation dedicated to rehabilitating disabled ex-soldiers.

Above Betty Pritchard with Royal Star & Garter Homes nurse care manager Lauren. **Inset** Jack Ovens, resident at our Surbiton Home.

For nearly 100 years The Royal Star & Garter Homes has been caring for disabled former servicemen and women. They provide outstanding nursing and therapeutic care to enable those who served their country to be as independent as possible and to live life to the full.

We all owe a great debt to veterans and their families, which is why The Royal Star & Garter Homes provides them with the friendship, care, and respect they deserve. The charity understands that having hope and purpose in life is important to us all, which is why it strives to ensure those it cares for enjoy life as much as possible. The charity is determined to provide brilliant care to the military family for generations to come.

What the charity does and why

Due to the many medical advances of the 21st century, more servicepeople are, thankfully, surviving injury into older age. The Royal Star & Garter Homes has adapted to meet the changing needs of those facing disability, particularly the increased need to provide 24-hour nursing and respite care within a homely environment.

With this in mind, the charity has begun a programme to build new modern homes that can provide truly person-centred care. It is particularly proud of its inspirational dementia care philosophy, incorporating the latest research available, so the charity can promote choice, safety, and peace of mind for those living with dementia.

Nearly 100 years of brilliant care

The charity was established in 1916 by Queen Mary and The British Women's Hospital Committee, working with the British Red Cross Society, to care for severely disabled young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. When the charity opened its doors at the old Star & Garter Hotel on Richmond Hill, Surrey, the average age of those it cared for was just 22.

Over the years, The Royal Star & Garter Homes has evolved to care for all disabled formers servicemen and women, and their partners. The charity remains committed to providing brilliant care and innovative therapies for all those it cares for. The charity maintains its strong military links and has enjoyed Royal patronage since its foundation, including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II since 1953.

Why they need your support

As a charity, it does not receive any direct government funding and relies on the generosity of supporters to fund the high level of specialist care that it provides.

The Royal Star & Garter Homes are there for people like Jack who is 107 years old and served in The Royal Dragoons regiment between 1926 and 1932, initially as a trooper. The charity helps him live life to the full.

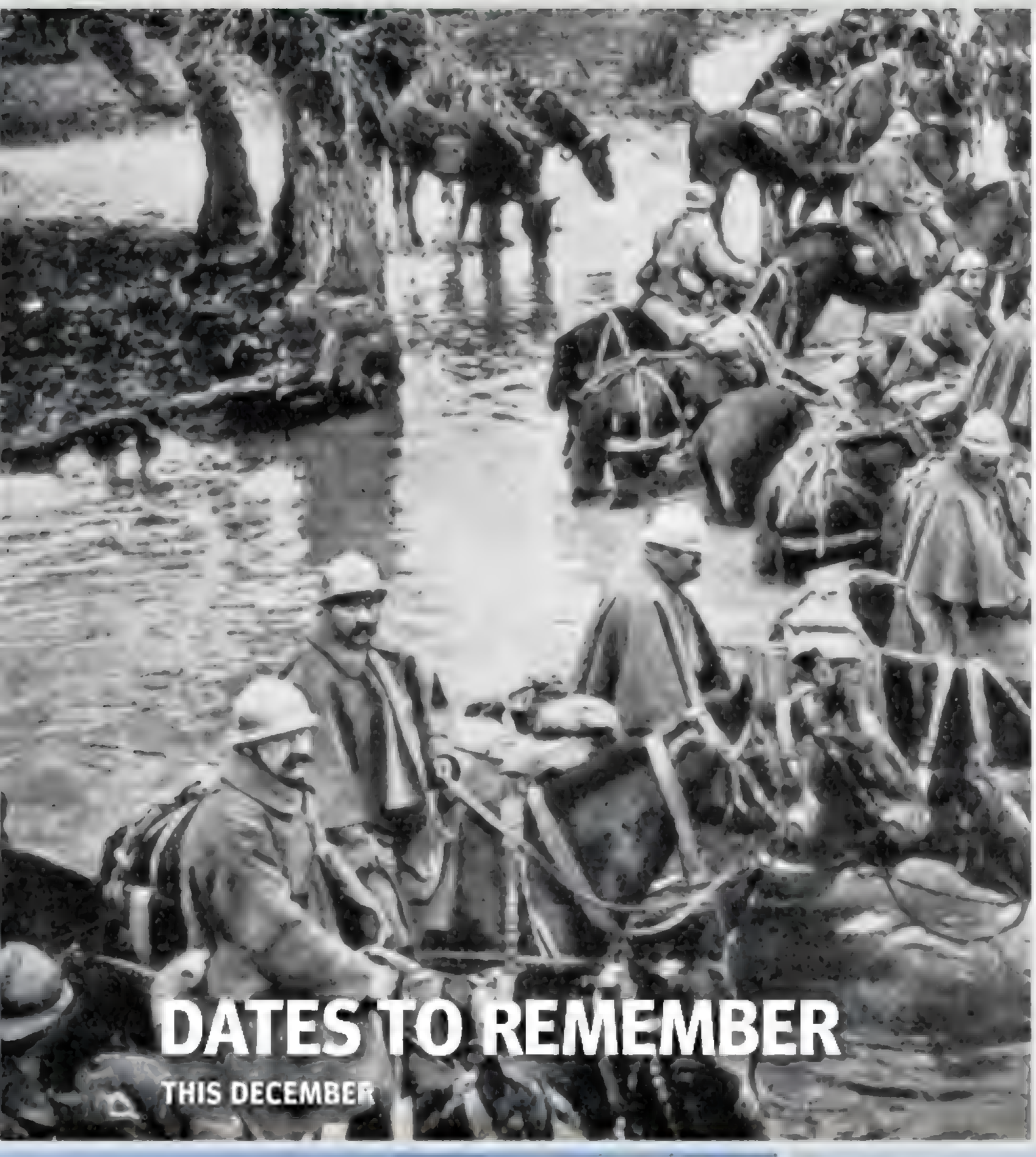
The Royal Star & Garter Homes
Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

Further information
Email: general.enquiries@starandgarter.org
Tel: 020 8439 8000
Web: www.starandgarter.org

DECEMBER 2013

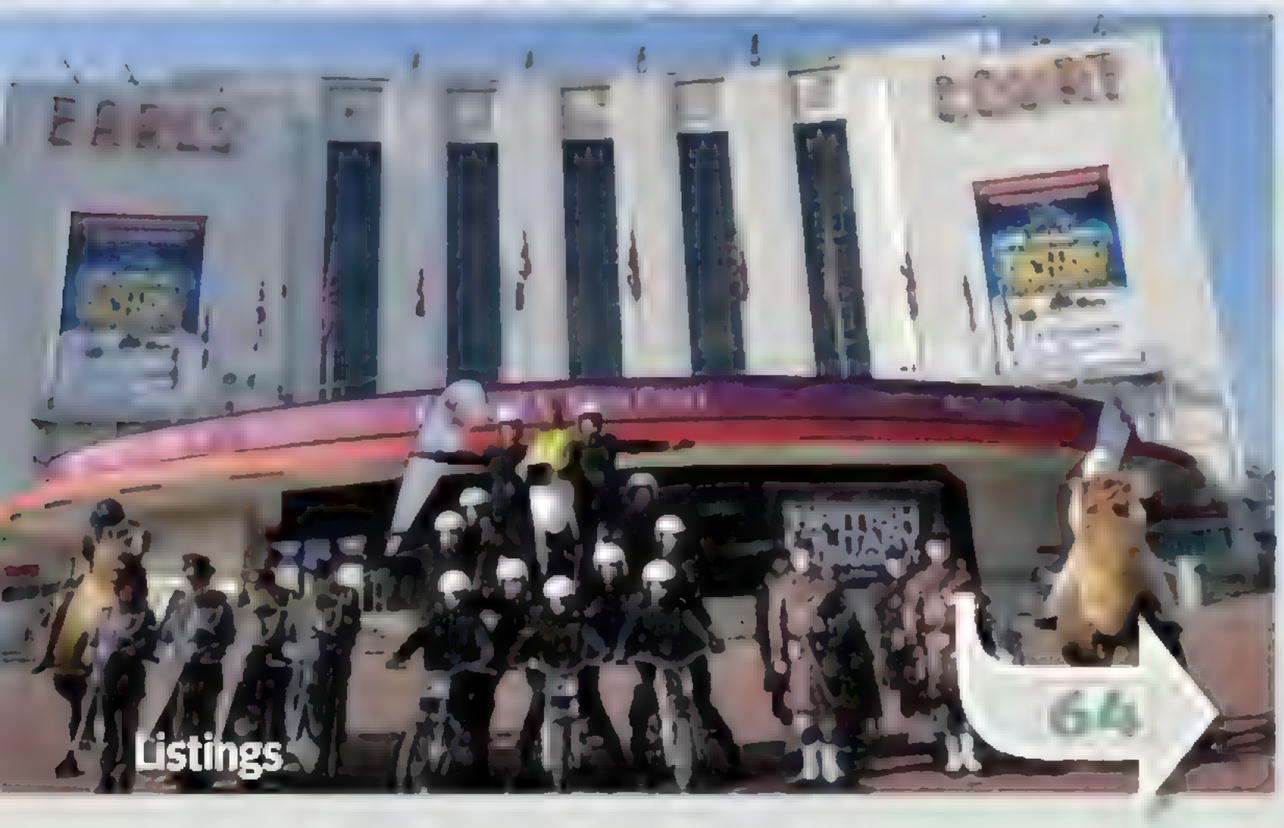
On Manoeuvres

LISTINGS | WAR ZONE



December The mighty British Military Tournament returns this December with what promises to be a show-stopping array of entertainment. With a theme celebrating the achievements of heroes and legends in British military history, the event will feature re-enactments, death-defying stunts, stunning military ceremonial set pieces, state-of-the-art audiovisuals and a submarine emerging through the floor of Earls Court! There are plenty of Christmas-themed events too, with concerts, lectures, and family activities focused on the festive period.

Travelling to the Scilly Isles for our War Zone this month, David Flintham explores the archipelago's rich British military heritage, which stretches back 400 years.



DATES TO REMEMBER

EVENT

Heroes of History

ABF The Soldiers' Charity in association with the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund has announced the return in 2013 of the British Military Tournament, supported by the Boeing Company. This year's theme is a celebration of the heroic achievements key figures in British military history. The code-breakers at Bletchley Park in World War II, Nelson at Trafalgar, Lawrence of Arabia, and today's servicemen and -women will all take centre stage. The Tournament will take place at Earls Court on 7-8 December (with two shows each day), building on the phenomenal success of its past three years with a spectacular new show.

The British Military Tournament
7-8 December 2013

Earls Court Exhibition Centre
Warwick Road
London SW5 9TA

FROM £29.75

0870 903 9033
www.britishmilitarytournament.com

TOUR

Touring the Trenches

This December heralds the first official 'Herts at War' Battlefield Tour. The tour will mark the beginning of a series of such events conducted in partnership with the renowned battlefield tour operator Battle Honours Ltd, each of which will follow the fortunes of the Hertfordshire Regiment through the course of the Great War.

Christmas Truce Tour

£210 FEE

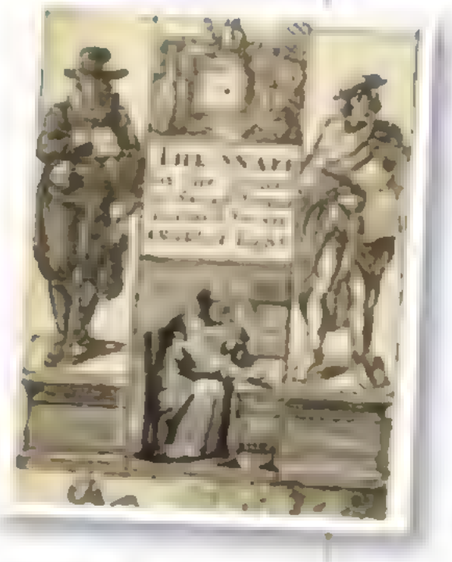
01438 791 020
www.hertsatwar.co.uk/christmas-truce-tour

LECTURE

Clausewitz Versus

FREE ENTRY

FAMILY EVENT



Cromwell's Christmas spirit

Did you know that Christmas was almost cancelled in 1647? Visit the National Army Museum as they travel back in time to the English Civil Wars. The King is captive but plotting, and the Long Parliament is trying to cancel Christmas! Meet the carol-singing insurgent Christmas celebrants and lend a hand as they decorate the museum galleries, close the shops, and invite you to play festive games.

Christmas is Cancelled!
7-8 December 2013

FREE ENTRY

020 7730 0717
www.nam.ac.uk

EXHIBITION

Big Brother's Evolution

One of Britain's leading photographers and film-makers, Donovan Wylie, will present an exhibition of his digital photography documenting the evolution and impact of modern military surveillance.

In this exhibition, Wylie interrogates the lasting personal and environmental legacy of temporary architecture, with images of British watchtowers in Northern Ireland, outposts in Afghanistan, and surveillance structures in the Canadian Arctic.

Donovan Wylie: Vision as Power
Throughout December

FREE ENTRY

020 7416 5000
www.iwm.org.uk

CONCERT

Rocking around the Lancaster

The RAF Museum's Christmas Concert will be held on 14 and 15 December 2013, this year welcoming back the fabulous Swing Time Sweethearts and the brilliant Barnet Band. Join the musicians beneath the magnificent Avro Lancaster for a very special Christmas treat.

Christmas Concert
14 December 2013

Historic Hangars
Grahame Park Way
London NW9 5LL

FREE ENTRY

020 8205 2266
www.rafmuseum.org.uk

LECTURE

The Gallant 600

In March 1942 the Royal Navy and British Commandos assaulted the German-held French Atlantic port of Saint-Nazaire in one of the most daring raids of the Second World War. Operation Chariot was dramatically successful, but that success came at a great cost.

Robert Lyman recounts the key events of this valiant mission, demonstrating how the decisive courage of a small group of men changed the course of the war.

Into the Jaws of Death: the Gallant 600 of the Saint-Nazaire Raid

£10 ENTRY

020 7881 6600
www.nam.ac.uk

LECTURE

YULE TRADITIONS EXPLAINED

Enjoy a mince pie and hear about the festive customs and traditions of Christmases past. Historian Colin Chapman will reveal the meaning behind the traditions we continue to follow and some of the bizarre ones we don't! Booking is essential and tickets are available at the museum shop, as well as by phone.

£6 ENTRY

FAMILY EVENT

Home Front Christmas

Take a step back in time and discover how Christmas was celebrated during the two World Wars and beyond. Make wartime Christmas decorations, enjoy a variety of activities, hear traditional carols and music, meet Father Christmas, and sample wartime Christmas foods as the choir sings. Then explore the indoor Christmas market with over 50 traders offering local crafts and produce, with Christmas treats and gift ideas for all.

The Wartime Christmas Festival and Craft Fayre
7-8 December 2013

The Tank Museum
Bovington
Dorset BH20 6JG

FROM £7.50

01929 405 096
www.tankmuseum.org

The Scilly Isles

Four hundred years of military history

David Flintham discovers an offshore treasure-trove of British military heritage.

Situated some 48km west-south-west of Land's End, the Isles of Scilly are England's most southern and westerly outpost. This granite archipelago comprises some 150 outcrops, only five of which – St Mary's, Tresco, St Martin's, Bryher, and St Agnes – are inhabited. Its strategic importance was summed up in 1602 by Sir Francis Godolphin (1540-1608), who stated, 'no other place can so aptly permit or restrain the traffic of Ireland and the north of Scotland with France or Spain'. From the middle of the 16th century onwards, national governments have acted on the strategic significance of the islands, creating four centuries of military heritage, mainly on the islands of St Mary's and Tresco.

Tudor defences

Before 1548, the only fortification was Ennor Castle, overlooking Old Town Bay on St Mary's, probably dating from the 13th century. While traces of the castle were visible in 1756, only a small wooded mound is visible today.

The Scilly Isles did not feature as part of the Henrician programme of coastal defences, but in 1548, in the reign of Edward VI, work commenced on Tresco Castle (later named 'King Charles' Castle'), a polygonal gun battery for five guns, located on Castle Down on Tresco's west coast. It guards both New Grimsby harbour and the northern approach to St Mary's. At the same time, work commenced on the 'Old Blockhouse', on the opposite coast, overlooking Old Grimsby harbour.

St Mary's main harbour is situated on St Mary's Pool, on the west of the island, facing Tresco. During the 1550s, construction began on a state-of-the-art bastioned fort overlooking the eastern side of the harbour. Known as 'Harry's Walls', it was never completed.

In 1570 Elizabeth I leased the islands to Francis Godolphin, who, in 1593, as a result of the on-going conflict with Spain, built the Star Castle, an eight-pointed star-shaped fort on the Hugh, the headland to the west of St Mary's harbour.

Two years later, Scilly's defences were nearly put to the test when Spanish forces landed at Mousehole, close to Penzance on the mainland. Godolphin had recognised the threat beforehand (thanks to a warning from an escaped English gunner) and, as Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, had requested reinforcements. As it was, the Spanish ignored Scilly, concentrating their attacks on Mousehole, Newlyn, and Penzance, where Godolphin led the defence.

Top Cromwell's Castle. The 18th-century gun platform is behind the tower. The island of Bryher is on the other side of the channel.
Above The remains of King Charles' Castle and the surrounding earthworks on Tresco.

Back on St Mary's, early in the 17th century, Godolphin constructed a pier for the harbour, as well as a curtain wall across the neck of land joining the Hugh to the rest of the island. This represented the start of the fortification that became known as 'The Garrison', and also the early development of Hugh Town, the capital of the islands.

The Civil Wars

By the 1620s, Scilly's defences were in need of repair and improvement. Earthworks were built surrounding King Charles' Castle, and the magazine, still

standing today, was built by the gate of the Garrison. Further defences were added in the years up to 1651, particularly by the Royalist garrison, who made good use of the coastal geography, placing batteries on rocky points, making direct frontal assaults very difficult.

During the First Civil War (1642-1646), the Scilly Isles were in Royalist hands, under the governorship of another Sir Francis Godolphin (1605-1667; grandson of the builder of Star Castle). From here a small fleet of Royalist privateers operated, and following the final surrender of Royalist forces in south-west England in March 1646, it was to Scilly that Charles, Prince of Wales, fled. Following Charles' departure to Jersey, a Parliamentary naval blockade led to the surrender of Scilly. But in 1648, the garrison rebelled against the governor and declared for the King.

Sir John Grenville (1628-1701) was installed as Royalist governor. Under his command, Scilly became a major privateering base, preying on both Dutch and Commonwealth shipping. The Dutch dispatched a fleet under the command of Admiral Maarten Harpertszoon Tromp – a threat which prompted a Commonwealth expedition to retake Scilly in April 1651. (A bizarre diplomatic relic of this conflict was that Scilly remained technically at war with the Netherlands until 1986!)

Admiral Blake

The strength of the fortifications on St Mary's ruled out a direct assault, and Admiral Robert Blake instead focused attention on Tresco. He eventually landed on Tresco's east coast, taking Old Grimsby and its blockhouse, before moving inland and striking against Kings Charles' Castle, whose defenders chose to blow it up to prevent capture. By 20 April 1651, Tresco was in Commonwealth hands.

Blake established a battery at Carn Near, the southernmost point, from which he could bombard St Mary's Pool and harbour. Grenville promptly surrendered.

Following its capture, many of Scilly's existing fortifications were maintained, while on Tresco a new fortification was erected in 1651/2, immediately below King Charles' Castle. Cromwell's Castle – as it became known – was a tall, round, rubble-built, two-storey gun tower, with an appearance that appears to anticipate the later Martello towers. The new work could mount six roof-top cannon.

Following the Restoration, Scilly's defences declined. In 1715 the engineer Colonel Christian Lilly found the island's defences in a poor state of repair, and set about a series of improvements as part of a wider review of the defences of the south-west coast of England.

The French threat

A major programme of construction was triggered by the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). Under the guidance of Abraham Tovey, the Board of Ordnance's representative on Scilly, work focused on the Garrison, where, over a period of seven years, a line of stone ramparts was constructed along the coastline. Most of the circuit was provided with redans (two-sided angled positions protruding from the main ramparts) with only occasional batteries.

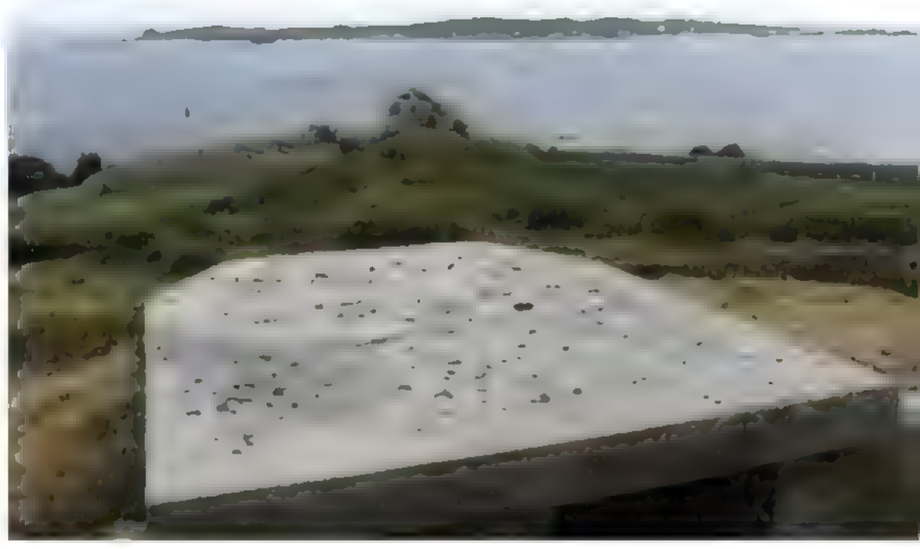
The ramparts were built between 1741 and 1747 in five phases, the earlier represented by regular smaller stones, the later by larger blocks; another feature of the latter phases were drainage holes. Today, the walls of the Garrison make an excellent coastal walk.

While the 18th-century defences were never put to the test, during the Napoleonic Wars they were rearmed, the size of the garrison was increased, and a signal station was established on St Martin's (only to be moved to St Mary's the following decade). There were several naval actions in the waters surrounding the Scilly Islands, including, in 1796, the capture of the French 44-gun warship *Virginie* by HMS *Indefatigable*.

More than 40 years after Waterloo, in response to the growing strength of the French Navy, the 1860 Royal Commission on the Defence of the United Kingdom set in motion the construction of the coastal defences which became known as 'Palmerston's follies'. Scilly, though, was excluded, and its garrison disbanded in 1863. Developments in breech-loading guns in the latter years of the 19th century soon made the Palmerston forts obsolete, however, and in 1882 the Morley Committee recommended the creation of a series of defended ports, including a protected anchorage for Scilly.

The plan was for two batteries, each mounting a pair of the latest 6-inch breech-loading guns (with a range of 11.5km), to be constructed facing south-south-west above the 18th-century Woolpack Battery on the Garrison. These would be supplemented by a pair of Defence Electric Lights (DEL), capable of illuminating enemy shipping in St Mary's Sound.

As a defence against torpedo boats, two further batteries, each mounting a pair of 12-pdr Quick-Firing guns (with a range of 7.3km) were to be established,



Top The northern bastion of the incomplete Harry's Walls, overlooking St Mary's Pool and harbour. On the distant hilltop is Star Castle. Harry's Walls immediately overlook Porthmellon, where the first seaplane base was established in 1917.
Middle Among the war graves in Old Town Churchyard are those of Flight-Sergeant Hyde, who died after his Hurricane ditched in the sea in June 1943, and Flight-Sergeant Capel, who was killed when his target-towing Defiant crashed in the same month.
Bottom This structure on the Woolpack Battery was one of 30 or so pillboxes built in 1941. Made of concrete, it was faced with granite to blend it in with the surrounding 18th-century fortifications.

one facing west at Steval Point on the Garrison, the other facing north at Bant's Carn, just over 2km north-east of the Garrison. In addition, there would be barracks, magazines, generators, and control stations.

The scheme was approved in 1898 and construction seems to have been complete by 1905, a year after the Entente Cordiale brought to an end more than two centuries of hostility with France. In 1906, moreover, the defences became virtually obsolete with the launching of HMS *Dreadnought*. ▷

Above The entrance and main façade of Star Castle, bearing the initials of Queen Elizabeth I. Star Castle is now a hotel.
Left The slipway of New Grimsby seaplane base, built in 1917. Aircraft launching and recovery trolleys ran on the iron rails.

The U-boat threat

Less than a decade later, Scilly was in the front-line against a new foe: the U-boat. Soon after the threat emerged, the Admiralty established a base for its anti-submarine patrols on Scilly, with a flotilla of tugs and armed trawlers. An airship station was also proposed, but this idea was soon abandoned; it was to be in another form of aerial warfare that Scilly would come to prominence.

With the onset of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, the number of anti-submarine air-bases had to be increased. The location of Scilly meant that any aircraft operating from the islands would automatically increase the air-cover above the Western Approaches by nearly 50km. This led to the establishment of a seaplane base at Porthmellon, just east of Hugh Town, but this proved too exposed, so the location was shifted to New Grimsby on Tresco.

The new base consisted of hangars, offices, stores, officers' and ratings' quarters, and a slipway still visible today. The base was initially equipped with Curtis 'Large America' flying boats and Short 184 sea-planes, and later 'Felixstowe' flying boats.

The base was operational in February 1917, and on 18 May 1917 a Scilly-based flying boat flew the first escort over a convoy. Less than a fortnight later, a 'Large America' spotted a surfaced U-boat near Bryher. In the subsequent attack, the flying boat was hit in the engine (a crew-member patched the damage with his handkerchief), but dropped two bombs and the U-boat was believed sunk. In August 1918 the unit became 234 Squadron RAF, and in all made 13 U-boat sightings and nine attacks.

World War II

A civil aerodrome had been established on St Mary's in 1937, but despite this Scilly was unprepared for war in September 1939. Civil preparations were well in hand, but the Isles had just one company of soldiers, no anti-aircraft defences, and hardly any naval presence. As a result of bombing raids in August 1940, Scilly's garrison was increased to 1,000 troops and two 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns were installed.

The raids continued into the next year, so on 19 May 1941 a flight of six Hawker Hurricanes from 87 Squadron was transferred to the aerodrome. Almost immediately, one of the Hurricanes was scrambled to intercept a German seaplane, and 1449 Flight soon had its first kill.

In just over a year, 1449 Flight would claim six enemy aircraft destroyed, two probables, and two damaged. In 1942 the Luftwaffe declared a 90-mile daylight no-fly zone around the islands, and there were no further raids.

These successes were not without incident, however. On 12 August 1943 one of the Scilly Hurricanes crashed into the masts of the *Scillonian* (the mainland ferry). In February 1944 a Liberator crash-landed by the aerodrome, the skill and courage of the pilot saving the crew but not himself. Altogether, 23 servicemen lost their lives on or around Scilly during the Second World War, 16 of whom are buried in Old Town Churchyard.

In 1941 some 30 pillboxes were constructed around St Mary's coast, several cunningly camouflaged (such as the one built into the Woolpack Battery). From May that year, Motor Torpedo Boats were stationed in St Mary's Pool, which also became an RAF Air-Sea Rescue base and an emergency base for Coastal Command flying-boats. New Grimsby became a base for the small boats running agents in and out of France.

In 1944, first Scilly's Hurricanes were withdrawn, and then the garrison. While hostilities continued beyond Scilly's coasts for the remainder of the war, the decommissioning of Star Castle in December 1944 brought Scilly's war to its close, and in so doing, ended some 397 years of military activity throughout the islands.

Visiting Scilly

There can be few places in Britain able to match Scilly for the scope and depth of its military heritage. Today much of this is in the care of English Heritage (Star Castle, however, is in private hands as a hotel). There are nearly 50 sites – two on the smaller islands, six on Tresco, and 39 on St Mary's (14 of these on the Garrison). Finally, in Hugh Town, there is Scilly's small but fascinating Isles of Scilly Museum, a fine starting-point for any exploration of the Scilly Isles.

The Official Tourist Board online visitor guide to the Isles of Scilly is at *www.simplyscilly.co.uk*. The Isles of Scilly Museum is at *www.iosmuseum.org*. English Heritage information on the Isles of Scilly is at *www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/southwest/islesofscilly*.

A useful history of and guide to the islands is *Defending Scilly* (English Heritage), written by Mark Bowden and Allan Brodie.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Flintham is a military historian specialising in 17th-century fortifications. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a member of the Fortress Study Group.

VICTORIA CROSS GEORGE CROSS

THE AUTHORISED HISTORY IN THREE VOLUMES

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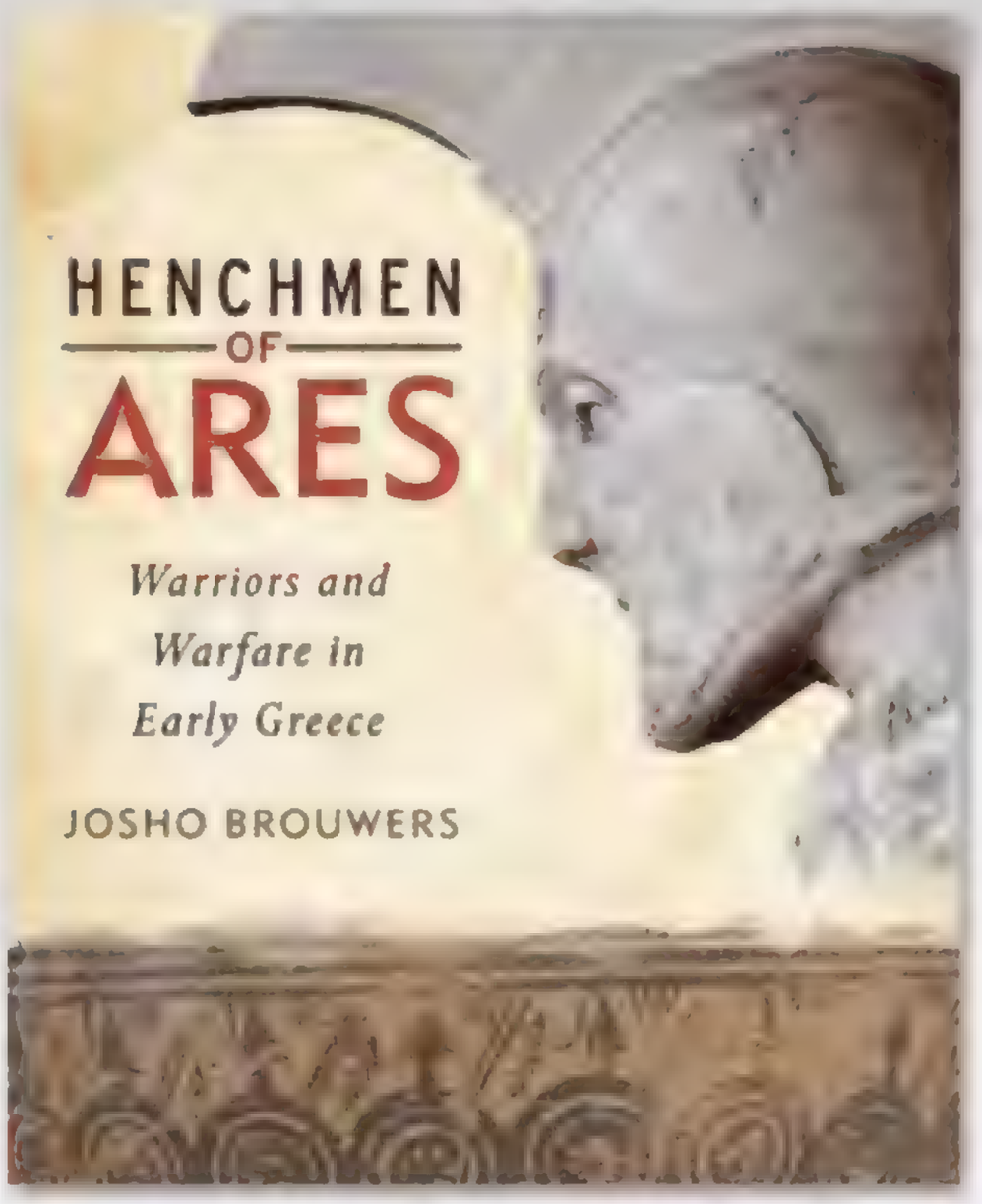

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DECEMBER 2013

MHMReviews

RECOMMENDED READ | BOOKS

December Exactly why did the world go mad in 1914? Another powerhouse release from top historian Max Hastings is subject to scrutiny by *MHM* Editor Neil Faulkner. *Catastrophe: Europe goes to war 1914* is this month's Recommended Read.

Mark Corby is impressed with *Richard Barber's Edward III and the Triumph of England* which covers Crécy, the longbow, and the world of chivalry. Curtis Hutchinson reviews Brian Moynahan's *Leningrad: siege and symphony* which deals with the horrors of the siege and Shostakovich's creation of his famous symphony in tandem.

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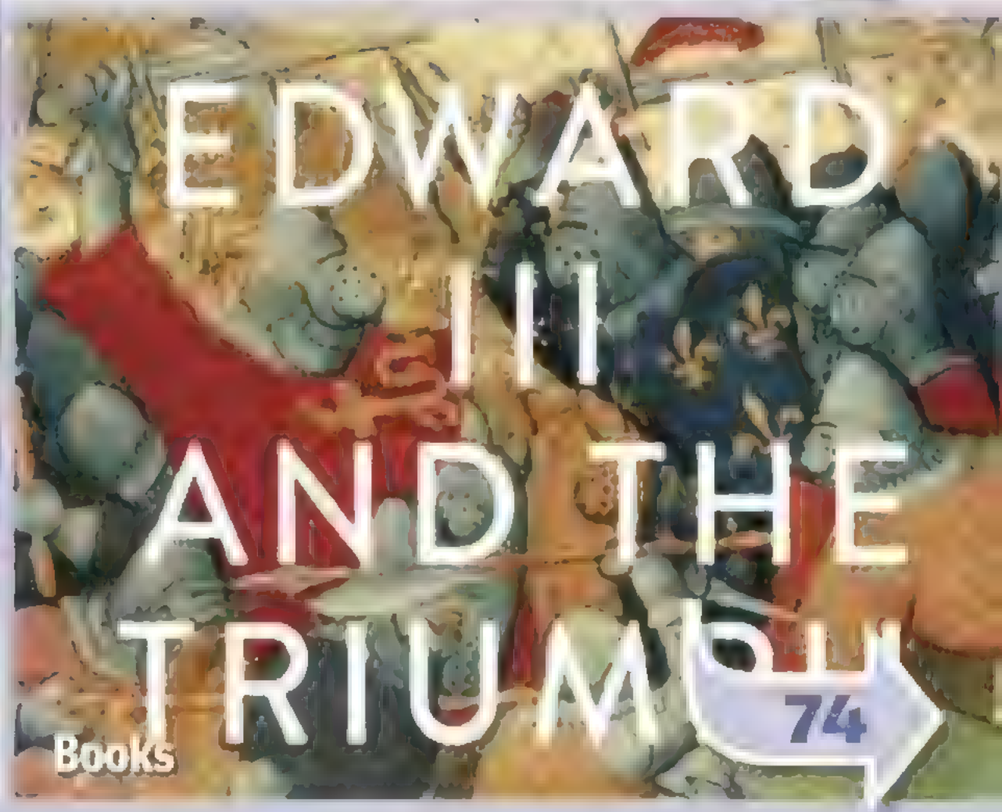

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Recommended READ

Max Hastings
William Collins, £30
ISBN 978-0007398577

The First World War centenary is still almost a year away, yet it feels as if it is already upon us. Last month we reviewed Jeremy Paxman's *Great Britain's Great War*. This month we look at Max Hastings' *Catastrophe*, a magisterial survey of political and military events between July and December 1914.

Hastings has honed to perfection a distinctive approach to military-history writing. He crafts a tightly woven narrative which shifts effortlessly from diplomacy and grand strategy to the human experience on the ground.

One moment we are with Moltke, the neurotic German commander-in-chief, at his Rhineland headquarters in Coblenz; Hastings analyses the fatal lack of 'grip' as the biggest military campaign in human history unfolds 100 kilometres to the west.

Then we are with the snaking columns in field-grey uniforms and spiked helmets, 1.5 million men in all, but with our attention drawn to one man in the mass, stumbling forwards, exhausted, caked in dust, sweating under the summer sun, heading for Paris amid the debris of his enemy's hasty retreat that litters the roadsides.

The intimate twisting together of history from above and below captures the way in which gigantic forces seized control of European society in August 1914 and churned it into tidal waves of violent motion – not just on the Western Front, but on the Eastern Front, where Germans and Russians clashed in East Prussia, and Austro-Hungarians and Russians clashed in Galicia, and also on the Southern Front, where the Serbs, though at terrible cost to themselves, threw back two mismanaged Austro-Hungarian invasions.

Exploded myths and ruined reputations

Also characteristic of the Hastings style are his ruthless myth-busting and his waspish judgements on duplicity, bungling, and negligence. When and by whom was the greatest single day's loss of the war incurred? Was it the first day of the Somme? Was it one of those terrible days of carnage at Verdun?

No: it was on 22 August 1914, when the French Army had 27,000 killed, victims of French Commander-in-Chief Joffre's hopelessly misconceived 'Plan XVII', which involved attacks by men in bright blue coats and red trousers, accompanied by officers waving swords, flag-bearers, and buglers, against lines held by opponents armed with magazine-rifles, machine-guns, and modern artillery. The French suffered a million casualties in 1914, one in four of their army, a third of a million of them killed.

But the French high command had no monopoly on military stupidity that summer. If Joffre was characterised by bovine stubbornness, Moltke went to pieces and lost control of the battle, and Sir John French, commander of the small British Expeditionary Force, proved himself unable to read the battlefield, unable to make decisions, and unable to avoid a moral collapse into such gloomy defeatism that he had to be ordered to keep his place in the Allied line by none other than Lord Kitchener, the British War Minister, dispatched on a personal visit from London to BEF headquarters.

Hastings writes acidly: 'Sir John's egregious misconduct – for his tenure of command in 1914 amounted to nothing less – did not alter the course of history, because forces far larger than the BEF determined outcomes. But his continuance as C-in-C through 1915 was a misfortune for those whom he led.'

Not the least of Hastings' many virtues as a military historian is his all-round perspective and his honesty in reporting the experiences of all of war's protagonists. If he reports more and worse atrocities on the part of the Central Powers, this reflects reality; their forces were often more bestial. But he acknowledges the savagery sometimes displayed by their enemies: anti-Semitic pogroms perpetrated by Russian troops, for example, or the ruthless murder of Austrian prisoners by vengeful Serbs. Still, he makes a moral judgement in favour of the Entente Powers' greater relative virtue; and this, he implies, reflects the fact that the war was, in a fundamental sense, a struggle between 'Western democracies and Central European conservatism'.

> Hastings crafts a tightly woven narrative which shifts effortlessly from diplomacy and grand strategy to the experience on the ground.

A necessary war?

This is a curious formulation. It is anchored in a perception of the Kaiser's Germany as exceptionally 'autocratic', 'militaristic', and 'expansionist'; and of the war as a whole as a collective effort to contain a European super-state that threatened the peace of the continent and the balance of power.

This simply will not do. The dichotomy is popular caricature, not serious historical analysis. Britain held Ireland against its will, and was force-feeding Suffragette prisoners for demanding the vote – was this not 'autocratic'? The British fleet was twice the size of the German – was this not 'militarist'? Britain and France had the largest empires in the world – was this not 'expansionist'? Hastings seems to be viewing the world of 1914 through nationalist spectacles.

He is guilty, too, of the fallacy of monocausalism in seeking to explain the First World War in terms of the character of Imperial Germany. The implication is that the Kaiser's regime can be comprehended without reference to any wider context; that it emerged, as it were, fully formed after long incubation in a hermetically sealed chamber, and then strode, a monster of destruction, across the continent of Europe between 1914 and 1945.

But history is not monocausal; it is dialectical and dynamic. It is the result of the clash of opposing forces whose interactions constantly reconfigure historical reality. To seek the causes of a complex sequence of events like the First World War is to explore a web of interconnections.

Ultimatums trigger responses. Responses are determined by war plans. Plans depend on railway timetables. The timetables matter because mass armies have to be moved to the front. Mass armies have been recruited because of rising international tension. The rising tension reflects growing competition between national-capitalist blocs.

Implicit in this web of connections is a hierarchy of significance. To switch metaphors – as we are surely entitled to do when dealing with such complexity – we might think of the outbreak of the First World War in terms of a series of frames within frames. Immediate triggers, like the Russian ultimatum, are framed by opposing war plans, like the Schlieffen Plan. Plans in turn are framed by the existence of mass armies and rival alliances. These are framed by the global competition for empire.

Only at this level of abstraction can we really get to grips with what went wrong in July 1914. For things did go wrong: everyone, from the most elevated statesmen to the humblest peasant conscript, became the plaything of vast, monstrous, impersonal forces. Gabriel Kolko, the great theorist of modern war, has offered the compelling argument that modern industrialised warfare is so deadly, so destructive, and so disruptive of social order and moral norms that recourse to it is insane; those who instigate it immediately lose control of it and, once unleashed, it remakes the world according to its own terrible logic.

This is a crucial difference between 19th-century 'cabinet wars' and 20th-century 'total wars'. The former were limited wars, for specific objectives, ended by negotiation and give-and-take tinkering with the geopolitical order. The latter consume entire societies, killing more civilians than soldiers, destroying the infrastructures of everyday life, and turning millions into displaced people.

Above The Kaiser (right) and his generals play war-games. But were they the only guilty men in 1914?

Which of the statesmen and generals who plunged the world into war in 1914 had any inkling of what it would be like, how long it would last, and what its consequences would be? None. The war was a giant leap into the darkness. As such, it could not be rational; it had to be an artefact of a deeply pathological world system in which humanity had lost control over the products of its own labour and turned them into a mechanism of mass destruction.

Max Hastings is among our finest military historians, and *Catastrophe* can be wholeheartedly recommended as a superb description and analysis of the opening campaigns of the First World War. What it does not provide is an adequate explanation of why the world went mad in 1914.

Neil Faulkner

Coming next...

Next month: Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945*, Allen Lane, £30, ISBN 978-0713995619.

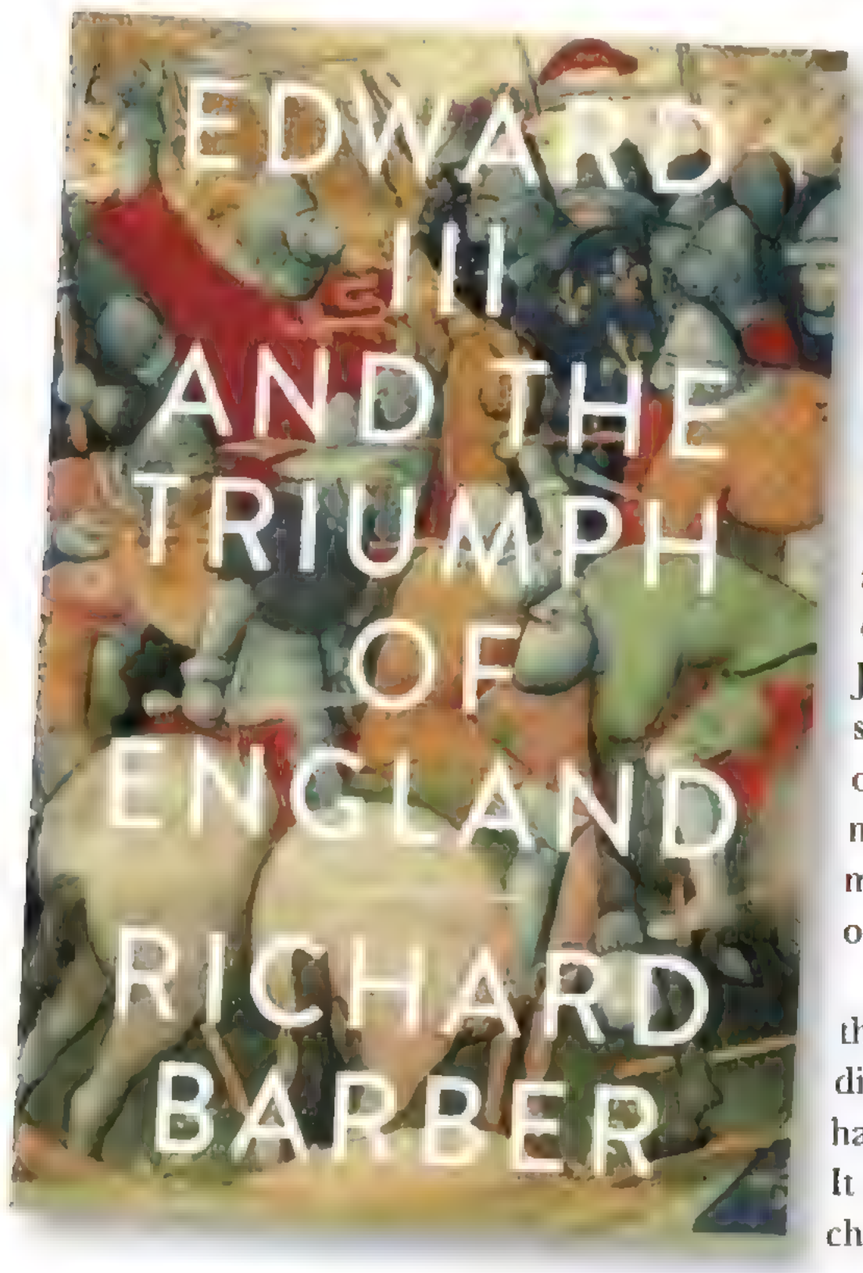
BOOKS

EDWARD III AND THE TRIUMPH OF ENGLAND: The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter

Richard Barber
Allen Lane, £30
ISBN 978-0713998382

Richard Barber is a noted authority on the medieval world of chivalry and the knightly culture it produced. He has written a number of works on the subject, including the recently acclaimed *The Knight and Chivalry*. In this work he provides an excellent analytical account of the campaign launched by Edward III in pursuit of his claim to the French throne. This campaign would catapult England and Edward from the very edge of the known world to the centre of the European stage, and determine the relationship between England and France for the next hundred years.

For many, the story of a small exhausted English army scurrying across northern France in late August 1346, before turning on and destroying its French pursuer in a lethal 'arrow storm' at Crécy, is a familiar one, and Barber devotes nearly half the book to describing it.



The rest of the book is devoted to the subject of chivalry, and in particular the foundation of the Order/Company of the Garter and the knightly culture it sought to develop.

Edward is described as a consummate professional both in the strategic and tactical sense. Pursuing his claim to the French throne would mean challenging the greatest military power in Europe on its own ground against enormous odds. His military experience in Scotland, like that of his grandfather, had convinced him he had the weapon – the longbow – to achieve this ambitious aim.

To the French, England was an obscure cultural clone that had recently been humiliated by tiny Scotland, had proved incapable even of conquering chaotic Ireland, and had been violently ejected from its Angevin inheritance over a century before.

In the event, Edward's thorough planning and preparation for launching one of the largest seaborne invasions of France prior to 1944, his sack of Caen, and his subsequent manoeuvring to force the French to fight the decisive encounter on ground of his choosing, completely negated any advantages the French assumed they had.

Barber's account of the Battle of Crécy postulates the novel idea that Edward used horse-drawn wagons, perhaps 700 of them, to form an impenetrable defensive perimeter. This tactic had previously been used by recalcitrant Flemish peasants at the battle of Mons-en-Pévèle in 1304, and would again be used with devastating effect by the zealous supporters of Jan Hus a century later. His main source for this theory is the account of the battle written by the Italian moneylender Matteo Villani, a man who based his observations on accuracy not fantasy.

However, readers brought up on the efficacy of the longbow will be disappointed that Barber appears to have slightly downgraded its potency. It is even suggested that the heroic, chivalric death of blind King John of Bohemia, fighting for the French, was not the work of the longbow. However, as Barber rightly states, the battle caused a sensation across Europe. Philip VI of France was the greatest monarch of the day, and he had been humiliated by an obscure upstart with an army of peasant archers and wagons. The epic death of King John of Bohemia added a further lurid aspect to this unprecedented victory and England's totally unexpected triumph.

> England and Edward would be catapulted from the very edge of the known world to the centre of the European stage.

The latter half of this book is devoted to the foundation of the Order/Companion of the Garter and the ethos of the chivalric world it was supposed to represent. Edward, steeped in Arthurian mythology, was forming a 'band of brothers' from a comparatively wide spectrum of society, and although not the oldest order of chivalry, it has proved to be one of the longest lasting.

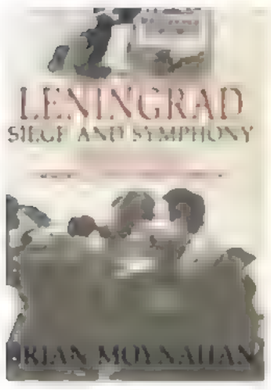
Barber also provides an interesting chapter on 'the laws and reality of warfare', which includes a fascinating account of the financial aspects of warfare, including the enormously profitable business of ransom.

This book comes with a superb collection of coloured illustrations, many taken from original manuscripts, together with excellent maps. For anyone wishing for an introduction to this ultimately unwinnable war this book is highly recommended.

Mark Corby

Leningrad: siege and symphony

Brian Moynahan
Quercus Publishing
ISBN 978-0857383006



The scale of Leningrad's suffering before and during WWII, and the lasting impact of the inspirational music of Shostakovich's 7th Symphony, are brilliantly captured in this extraordinary book.

Brian Moynahan draws on his journalistic skills – he was European Editor of *The Sunday Times* – to tackle what is an ambitious brief: to shed new light on the siege, while analysing the genesis of one of the 20th century's most celebrated classical pieces.

Moynahan delivers his story in a sweeping cinematic manner. The pace is fast and the characters well-drawn. It reads like a novel, but is packed with painstakingly researched historical detail, with Moynahan relishing the challenge of adding a new twist – the parallel human story of Shostakovich's quest to give his native city, which he experienced being broken by Stalin and bombarded by Hitler, the musical homage it deserved.

The human story is painful. The book captures the city in the early 1930s. Architecturally spectacular, it was, after all, the former Tsarist capital of St Petersburg, with a thriving cultural scene. However, Stalin subjected it to a brutal purge – with no respite during the war – following the 1934 assassination of Sergei Kirov, the city's ruling Bolshevik and one of Stalin's few close friends.

The book explores the extent of the purge, and how it was run with brutal efficiency by the NKVD, the forerunner of the KGB. No one was safe – from stamp collectors (clearly harbouring subversive foreign sympathies) to the cream of the military elite (many targeted for their participation, fighting fascists, in the Spanish Civil War).

Moynahan's narrative brings some sense to the Orwellian madness. He also shows how even Shostakovich lost loved ones to the purge and feared for his life: experiences which would inform his most famous work.

It is the story behind the writing and eventual performance of the symphony that provide the book's cornerstone. And what a compelling story it is. Rejected twice for military service, Shostakovich realised he could best serve his country by focusing on a piece of work encapsulating the plight of Leningrad. A prolific composer, he started writing it as the Germans began to close in and during the bombardment, working by night as a rooftop firewatcher, completing the first two movements swiftly before the Soviets airlifted him out to complete it in safety.

Moynahan, using participants for many of his primary sources, provides an evocative account of its first performance in Leningrad. The German army were just seven miles from the Philharmonic Hall, and the orchestra was depleted in numbers and strength, with some musicians in an advanced stage of starvation. The performance provides uplifting bookends to a book which often delves deeply into man's limitless potential for inhumanity.

If Moynahan had concentrated on the siege he would have written a worthy companion piece to Anthony Beevor's *Stalingrad*. Instead, he has delivered something unique, a powerful and redemptive piece of work befitting Leningrad the city, its symphony, and its revered son.

Curtis Hutchinson

Custer's Last Battle

Paul Goble
Wisdom Tales, £10
ISBN 978-1937786113

It is little wonder there have been over 3,000 publications on the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The 1876 engagement, in which General George Custer and several companies of the US 7th Cavalry were wiped out by an array of Native American tribes in an attempt to cajole them into Indian reservations, has long possessed a broad fascination.

The battle has always been best known for stirring tales of personal bravery. The names of Custer and his adversaries Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull were once rarely absent from the silver screen. Historically, it was significant as the last hurrah of Native American military power. The tribes after that moment were not able to sustain such grand forces in the field, and despite their victory they were eventually compelled to withdraw to the reservations.

For military historians, the battle has posed a series of conundrums. Since Custer's immediate detachments were completely destroyed, there were no precise US accounts of his force's movements during the engagement. From 1876 to the present day, debates have raged over everything from Custer's recklessness – his refusal to take reinforcements or Gatling guns into the field – to the exact tactics he adopted when retreating from the enemy onslaught.

Despite much competition, Paul Goble's book stands out as a treatment of the battle. Aimed primarily at children, it is a fictionalised first-person account of Little Bighorn, told from the perspective of a Lakota warrior named Red Hawk. The text is notable for drawing on orally transmitted Native American accounts of the battle as well as using received histories.

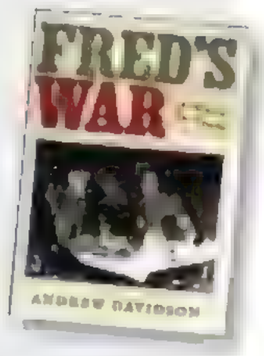
First written in 1969, when such native accounts were little valued, it was in this respect ahead of its time. The description of the battle is as detailed and accurate as can possibly be known. The new edition reflects the findings of the latest research on the battlefield. It treats of the wider context of US–Native American relations, and the threat to the tribal way of life, although it might have touched on the 1874 gold rush to the area and the diplomatic attempts to diffuse the tension this caused.

It does not shrink from dealing with the brutality of the conflict. The account describes the effect of the cavalry attack on the Indian warriors, and also the mutilation and scalping of fallen US soldiers in their turn. Nevertheless, it pays respect to the heroism of both sides. It manages all of this in simple and engaging prose that is clear and suitable for the young reader.

This new edition includes for the first time the author's illustrations of the battle, reproduced to his original specifications. His drawings, which are in the style of Native American 'ledger-book' art and now kept in the South Dakota Art Museum, make the printed book a thing of beauty. It also carries a foreword by Joe Medicine Crow, a 99-year-old tribal chief and grandson of one of Custer's scouts. The depth and sensitivity of the text along with the beguiling illustrations make this an engrossing read, and will provoke the young reader to discover more about the battle.

Bijan Omrani

ON THE HORIZON



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Andrew Davidson
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Erwin Bartmann
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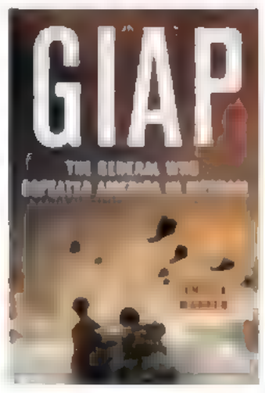
Giáp: the general who defeated America in Vietnam

James A Warren
Palgrave Macmillan, £17.99
ISBN 978-0230107120



General Võ Nguyên Giáp, who died last year, commanded the Vietnam People's Army (PAVN) and led his country to victory in the First Indochina War (1946-1954) and the Vietnam War (1965-1975). In inflicting major defeats on the French and then the USA, he deserves to be regarded as one of the most significant military commanders of the 20th century.

The book is an in-depth analysis of the strategies and tactics of a man who author Warren considers as the embodiment of the Vietnamese Communist way of war. Yet despite his reputation and the implications of his tactics – he may be considered a man who changed the face of modern warfare – relatively little is known of him. He was influenced by T E Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, but how he developed his revolutionary ideas and carried them out with such ruthless efficiency remains largely unknown. Indeed, Giáp has a reputation for the callous expenditure of the lives of his own troops – in the wars against France and the USA, 1,100,000 Communist soldiers died.

Warren argues that the outcome of the Vietnam war rested more on Giáp's talents than American blunders, and his successes were due in no small measure to the concept of a nation under arms – the realisation that war is not just about opposing armies, but the strength of a country's social fabric.

As Warren concludes, 'Giáp never doubted that the power of his soldiers' and citizens' commitment to the Vietnamese revolutionary vision would compensate for the inferiority of their military forces in firepower, training and technology.' It is through an appreciation of this that we begin to see how Giáp managed to beat two world powers against incredible odds, at massive cost – the number of North Vietnamese deaths, military and civilian, during the Vietnam War probably numbered in excess of a million.

Western histories tend to focus on why France and the USA lost in Vietnam, but Warren addresses this bias to demonstrate how the Communists under Giáp won.

David Flintham

Out of the Mountains: the coming age of the urban guerrilla

David Kilcullen
Hurst & Co, £20
ISBN 978-1849043243

If David Kilcullen has given us an accurate forewarning of what is in store on the urban terrorism front in the coming years, we are indeed facing grim days ahead. Rapid population growth, accelerating urbanisation, masses of people migrating to coastal cities, networked connectivity – overshadowed by the climate-change effect of rising sea waters – raise the prospect of a doomsday scenario.

In an age of drones and other systems of remote warfare, we are perversely likely to see more frequent state intervention in foreign conflicts, precisely because of the potential to achieve a military objective with fewer troops on the ground.

The conflict climate for what Kilcullen calls 'non-state' as opposed to state-on-state warfare involves large complex cities, in which governance systems are stretched to breaking point. These mega cities become fertile ground for terror operations by urban guerrilla groups.

To Kilcullen's mind, the 2008 Mumbai attack represents the current state of the art in urban littoral terrorism, showing that a non-state armed group can carry out an appallingly effective seaborne raid on a major coastal city. The terrorists' objective, he says, was to shut the city down. The raid also highlighted the impact of connectivity. The guerrillas got feedback from Twitter intercepts in Karachi that a group of guests had fled downstairs to hide, and they were sent down to kill them.

These urban sprawls lack the means to defend themselves from attack, more so in the future, with the addition of three billion city-dwellers in a generation's time, mostly in low-income countries already short of resources and lacking in governance capacity. So are we looking at massive urban carnage, with swarms of feral dogs, pigs, and horses infesting the streets during operations in destroyed or conflict-affected cities, as Kilcullen himself has witnessed?

Jules Stewart

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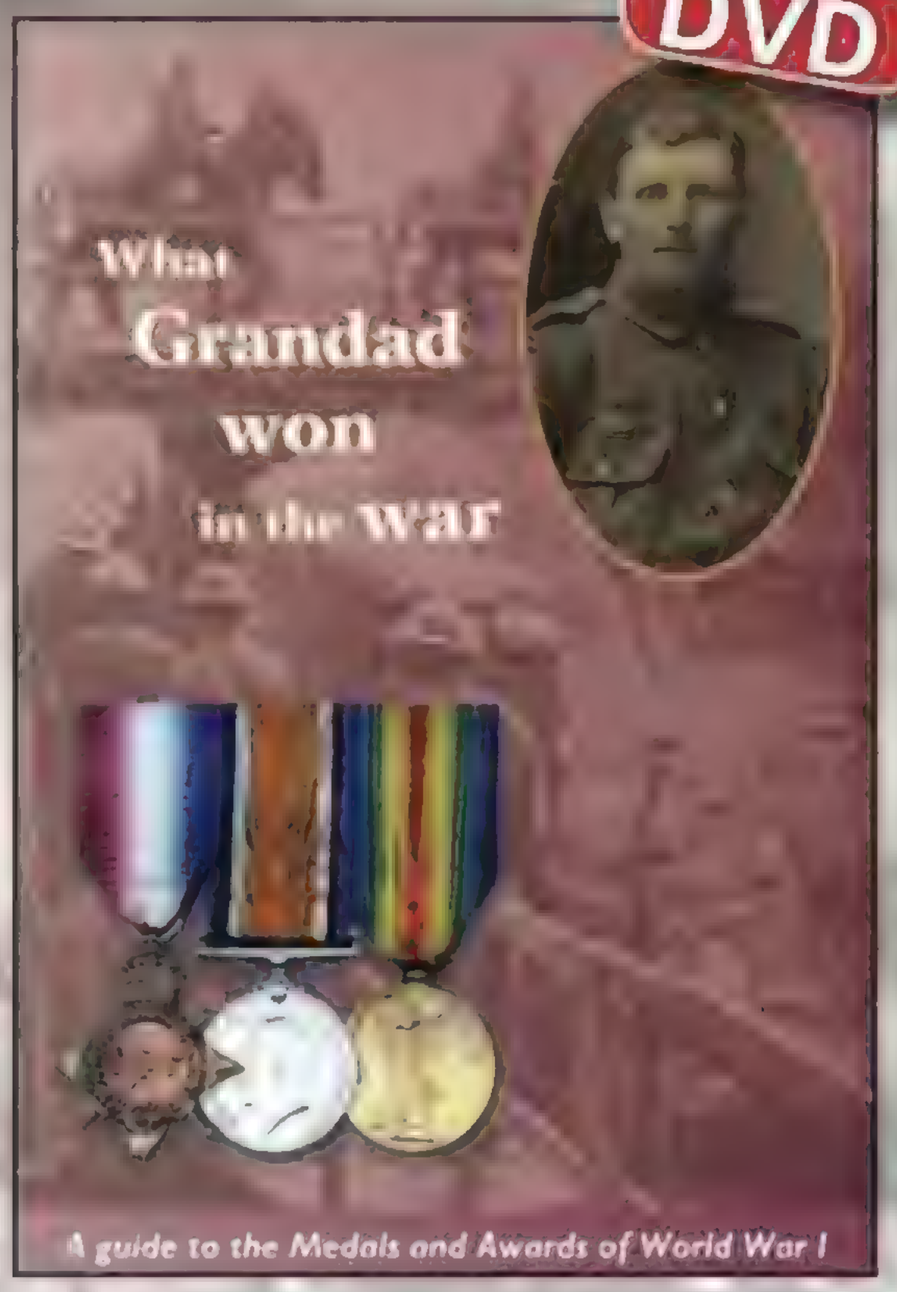

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COMPETITION

Take the **MHM** quiz for your chance to **WIN**

This month we have **5 COPIES** of

THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE CO-OP

Melita Norwood and the ending of Cold War espionage by David Burke to be won.

On 11 September 1999 *The Times* newspaper carried the front-page article: 'Revealed: the quiet woman who betrayed Britain for 40 years. The spy who came in from the Co-op.' Melita Norwood, the last of the atomic spies, had finally been run to ground, but at 87 she was deemed too old to prosecute. Her crime: the hastening of the Soviet Union's atomic-bomb project by up to five years.

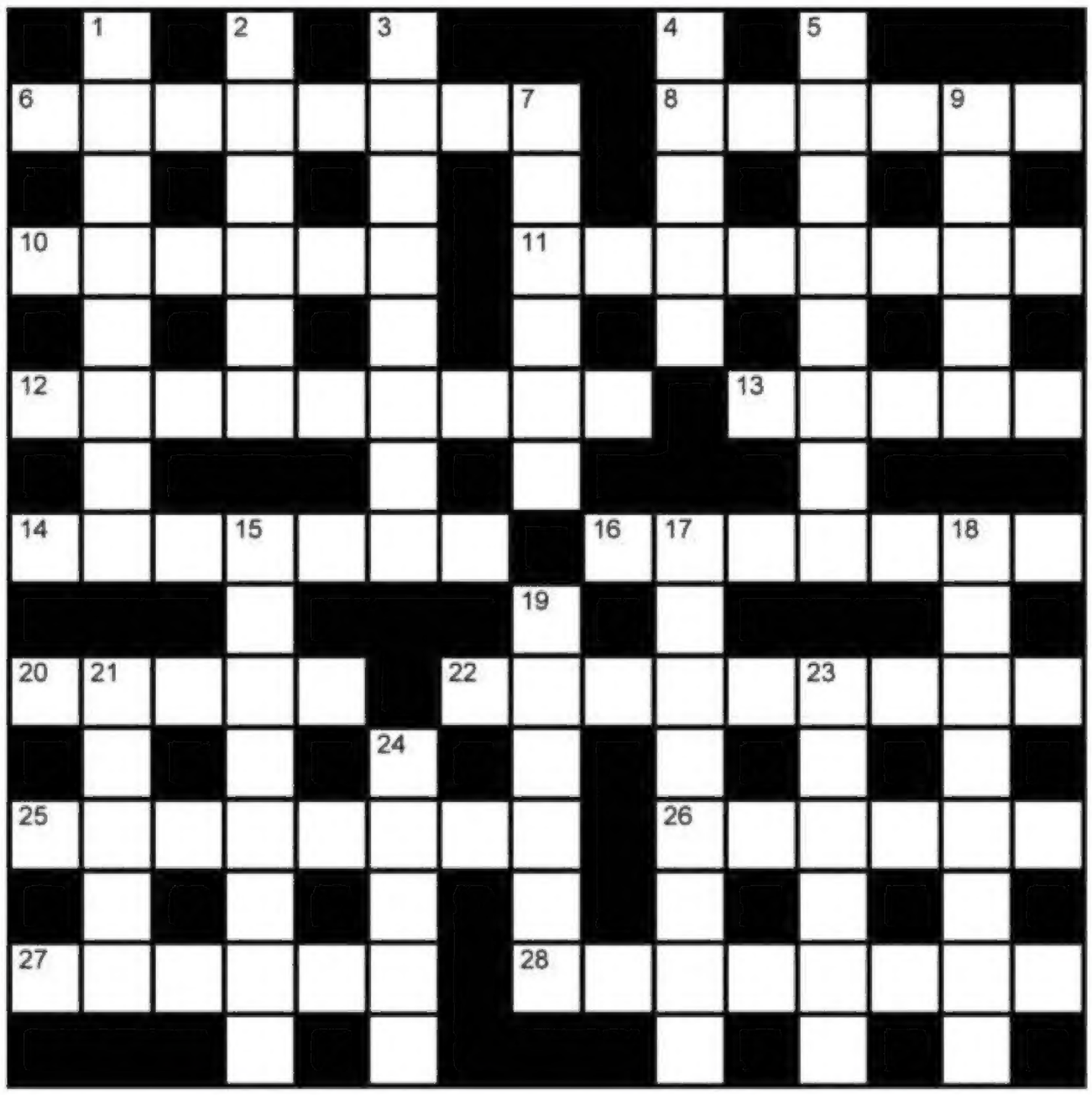
At a time when the world faces fresh dilemmas caused by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, this is the remarkable story of a much earlier drama. After the atomic bomb strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, British and American intelligence estimated the earliest date for the production of a Soviet bomb to be 1953. In fact, the Soviet Union went nuclear in 1948, and tested an atomic bomb in 1949.

Completion of the Soviet Union's bomb coincided with the onset of the Cold War, and threatened humankind with extinction. Norwood was a member of one of those Communist spy networks in America and Britain that, by guaranteeing those weapons of mass destruction, threw down a challenge to America as sole superpower in the post-Second World War era. This fascinating book sets her in the context of the times, and uses her as a prism through which to investigate the whole milieu.

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer the following questions at ***www.military-history.org***:

1. Active for around 40 years, Melita Norwood was only unmasked in which year?
2. Norwood – or Agent Hola – spied for which foreign power?
3. Norwood was first recruited by which Soviet organisation, an early forerunner to the KGB?

TO ENTER THE QUIZ go to *www.military-history.org*



MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our regular crossword.
The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

6 ___ Arnold, American general who defected to the British during the Revolutionary War (8)

8 City in Picardy captured by the Prussians in 1870 (6)

10 French marshal famous for his victories at Austerlitz and Auerstadt (6)

11 Battle which ended the dynasty of the Plantagenets (8)

12 Roman emperor killed at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 AD (9)

13 Count of ___, commander of the Catholic League during the Thirty Years' War (5)

14 Royal Navy light cruiser moored permanently on the Thames (7)

16 Empire whose army defeated the Polish and Hungarians at the Battle of Varna in 1444 (7)

20 Large German tank of WWII (5)

22 British heavy bomber of which 7,377 were built between 1941 and 1946 (9)

25 General who surrendered Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942 (8)

26 American company that built the Marauder bomber and the Mariner flying boat (6)

27 Bird used to carry messages in both World Wars (6)

28 Union general, commander of the Army of the Shenandoah (8)

DOWN

1 US state where the Battle of Cooch's Bridge was fought in September 1777 (8)

2 ___ Robertson, Confederate general who commanded the Texas Brigade (6)

3 People of the ancient Middle East, opponents of the Egyptians at the Battle of Kadesh in 1274 BC (8)

4 Wood used in the construction of the de Havilland Mosquito (5)

5 Emperor of Japan during WWII(8)

7 North African port captured by Axis forces in June 1942 (6)

9 ___ Native Contingent, an auxiliary force recruited from Africans, which served with the British in the Zulu War (5)

15 A maker of arrows (8)

17 Chief of the Shawnee who was an ally of the British in the War of 1812 (8)

18 ___ Horse, Sioux chief fatally wounded at the Battle of Slim Buttes in September 1876 (8)

19 'Screaming ___', nickname of the US 101st Airborne Division (6)

21 Tribe which rebelled against the Romans and destroyed Colchester and London (5)

23 Country on which Austria-Hungary declared war in July 1914 (6)

24 George de Lacy ___, commander of the British Auxiliary Legion in Spain during the First Carlist War (5)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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ADD US NOW and have your say

CAPTION COMPETITION

We continue our caption competition with an image from our Napoleon feature. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at **www.military-history.org/competitions**.

WINNER:

Why is it that I always have to carry the huge ball of cotton wool?
David Gradwick

RUNNERS-UP:

And don't ever crash our toga party again!
Louis Coxe

You were warned! No snowballs!
Gary Beach

Think you can do better?

Log onto ***www.military-history.org/competitions*** to enter the next CAPTION COMPETITION. Flex your funny bone and be in with a chance of getting your caption published in the next issue of *Military History Monthly*!

ANSWERS

NOVEMBER ISSUE | *MHM* 38

ACROSS **6** Napier, **7** Anderson, **10** Berezina, **11** Naples, **12** Kyoto, **13** Corporal, **15** Barnet, **16** Bailey, **19** Fusilier, **21** UNITA, **24** Baltic, **25** Ironside, **26** Voronezh, **27** Fairey.
DOWN **1** Naseby, **2** Five-star, **3** Craig, **4** Badajoz, **5** Draper, **8** Doniphan, **9** O'Reilly, **14** Jellicoe, **15** Buffalo, **17** Longship, **18** Jericho, **20** Sutton, **22** Tedder, **23** Wolfe.

Heinkel He177 – too hot to handle

Above A Heinkel He177 in flight.

It seemed like such a good idea at the time. Nazi Germany needed a strategic heavy bomber capable of carrying six tonnes of bombs to targets 950 miles from its base and flying at 8,000m, too high for enemy fighters to intercept. However, vector bombsights originally developed during the First World War were still in use during the 1930s and accuracy from high altitude could not be guaranteed. Impressed by the precision dive-bombing of the Junkers Ju87 Stukas during the Spanish Civil War, the *Luftwaffe* concluded that their new heavy bomber should attack targets by diving.

Heinkel were chosen to manufacture this revolutionary warplane, designated the He177 Greif ('Griffin'). Weighing eight times as much as a Stuka when fully loaded, the He177 required four engines to meet its performance targets, but the propellers created too much drag for dive-bombing, so Heinkel's chief designer, Siegfried Gunter, devised a radical solution. Two Daimler-Benz DB601 V12 engines were coupled together to drive a single propeller, creating a four-engined aircraft with only two propellers. Ingenious, but flawed. The twin engines shared a central exhaust system, which overheated and ignited any oil or grease that had seeped from the motors. Engine fires were so common that aircrew nicknamed it the *Luftwaffenfeuerzeug* or 'airforce lighter'. Employed for the first time in an anti-shipping role in November 1943, the captain of an Allied merchant ship reported flames coming from the starboard engine of one of the attacking aircraft.

> Engine fires were so common that aircrew nicknamed it the *Luftwaffenfeuerzeug* or 'airforce lighter'.

These were not the only shortcomings of the He177. In order to cope with diving at an angle of 60 degrees, the fuselage had to be lengthened and strengthened, significantly increasing weight and affecting both performance and handling.

To cap it all, by the time the He177 entered active service in January 1942, Germany had developed the Lotfe 7 bombsight, which was accurate from heights of 4,000m, rendering dive-bombing unnecessary. By then it was too late to revert to a traditional four-engined layout, which would have solved the engine reliability issues.

On the plus side, He177 aircrew had a fairly good chance of surviving operations. Gliding down from high altitude to 4,500m to release its payload made it tricky for British radar guiding the anti-aircraft guns to predict its course, while on the Eastern Front, most Soviet interceptor fighters operated at too low a level to catch the He177. In total, 1,169 He177s were built, but events overtook the Luftwaffe's only strategic bomber one last time. By August 1944 Allied air raids had reduced German production of aviation fuel by 90% compared to May, and all He177s were grounded because scarce fuel was desperately needed for defensive fighters.

Perhaps the final word should go to one of Britain's top test pilots, Eric Brown, who flew an He177 that had been captured in September 1944: 'Somehow the He177 always conveyed an impression of fragility despite its size.' It was 'one of the very few German aircraft of the period that I tested that I did not enjoy flying.'

Dan Sager

Left The original dive-bombers. The success of the Stukas during the Spanish Civil War inspired the creation of the He177.

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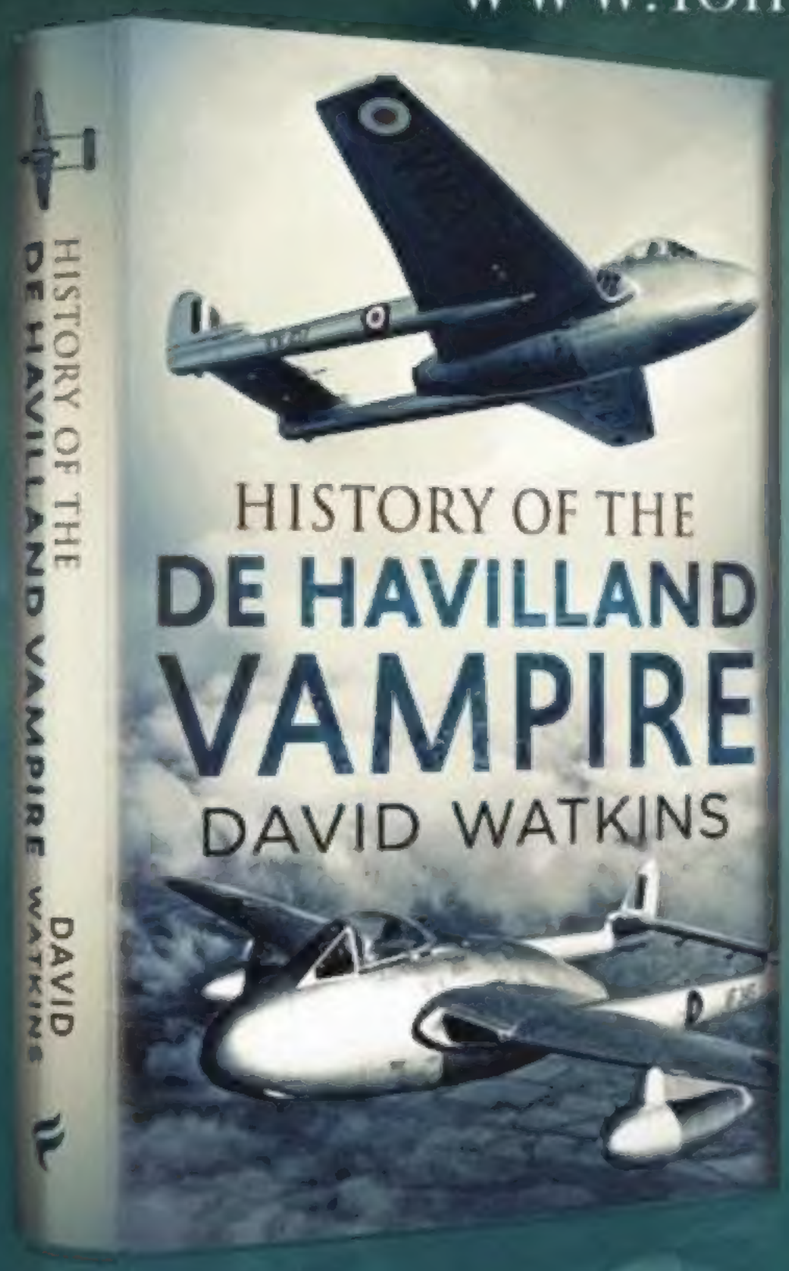

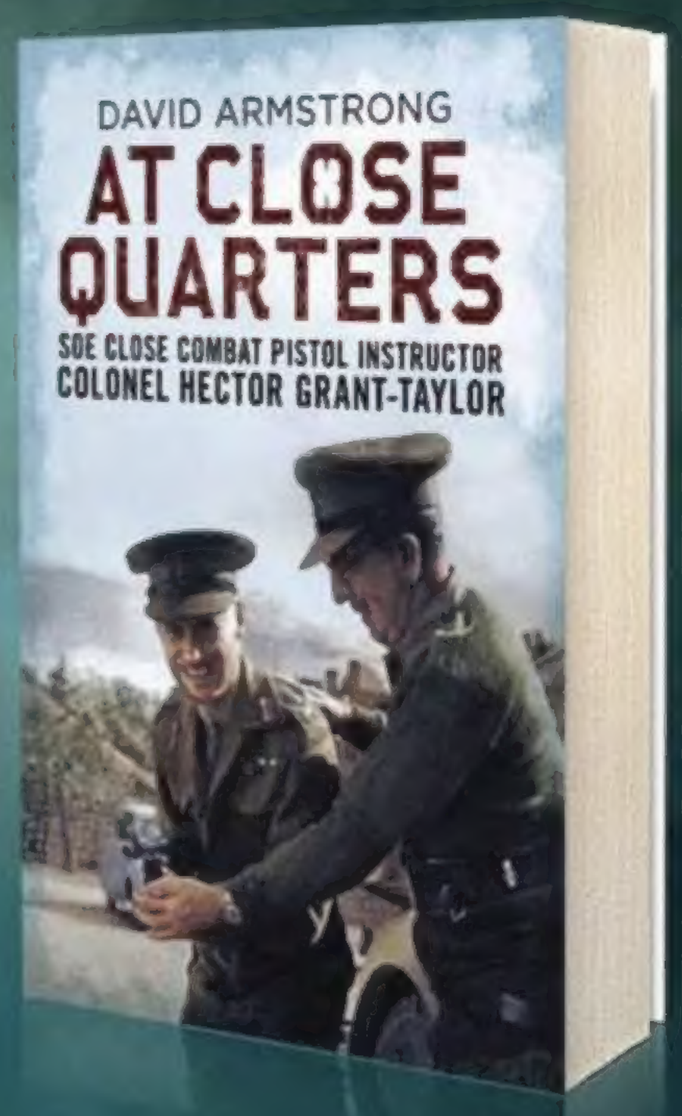

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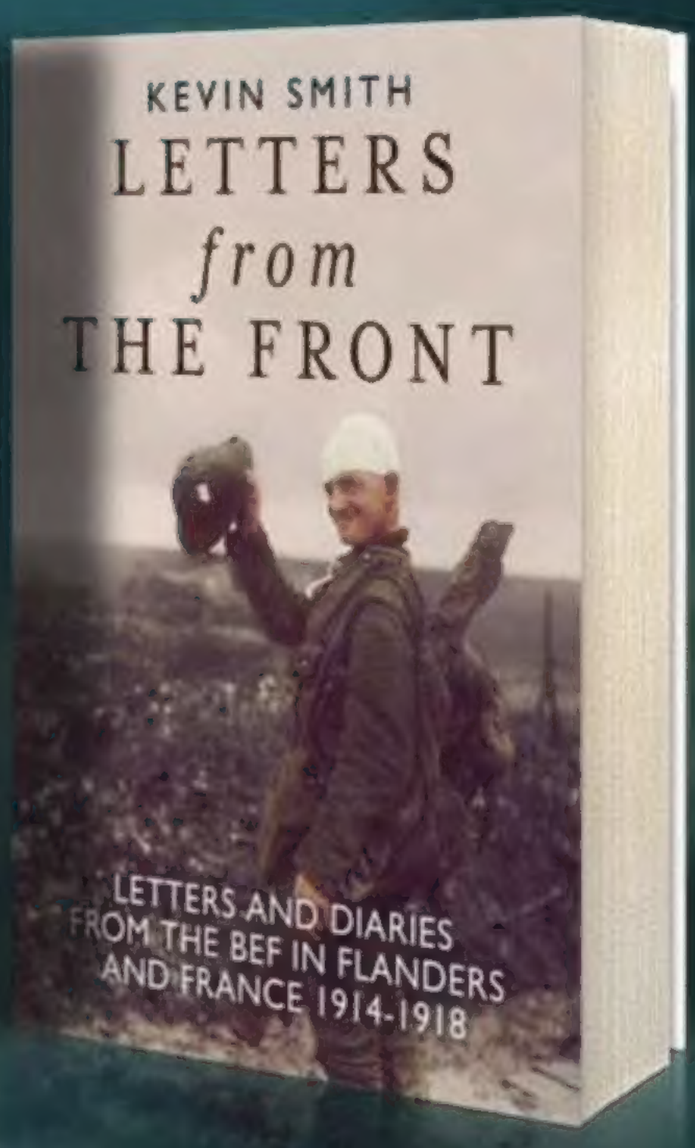

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